



R. B. SHERIDAN ESQ^R

Drury Lane Theatre!

Published Dec^r 21. 1795. by B. Crosby. 4 Stationers Court. Ludgate Street.

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THE
DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

R. B. SHERIDAN, Esq.

CONTAINING,

The School for Scandal.
The Rivals.

| The Duenna.
The Critic.

L O N D O N :

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THE
SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL,
A COMEDY.

SCHOOL FOR SCANDALS

A COMEDY

CHARACTERS.

MEN.

SIR PETER TEAZLE,	-	MR KING.
SIR OLIVER SURFACE,	-	MR YATES.
JOSEPH SURFACE,	-	MR PALMER.
CHARLES,	-	MR SMITH.
CRABTREE,	-	MR PARSONS.
SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE,	-	MR DODD.
ROWLEY,	-	MR AIKEN.
SIR TOBY BUMPER,	-	MR VERNON.
MOSES,	-	MR BADDELEY.
CARELESS,	-	MR JEFFERSON.
TRIP,	-	MR LAMASH.
SNAKE,	-	MR PACKER.

WOMEN.

LADY TEAZLE,	-	MRS ABINGTON.
MARIA,	-	MRS BRERETON.
LADY SNEERWELL,	-	MRS HOPKINS.
MRS CANDOUR,	-	MISS POPE.

SCENE, LONDON.

PROLOGUE.

Written by MR. GARRICK.

A SCHOOL for Scandal!—Tell me, I beseech you,
Needs there a school, this modish art to teach you?
No need of lessons now—the knowing think—
We might as well be taught to eat and drink:
Caus'd by a dearth of Scandal, should the vapours
Distress our fair ones, let them read the papers;
Their powerful mixtures such disorders hit,
Crave what they will, there's *quantum sufficit*.

“Lord!” cries my Lady Wormwood, (who loves tattle,
And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle)
Just ris'n at noon, all night at cards, when threshing
Strong tea and scandal—bless me, how refreshing!
“Give me the papers, Liss—how bold and free! (*sips*)
“Last night Lord L. (*sips*) was caught with Lady D.
“For aching heads, what charming *sal volatile*! (*sips*)
“If Mrs B. will still continue flirting,”
“We hope she'll *draw*, or we'll *undraw*, the curtain—
“Fine satire, pox! in public all abuse it;
“But, by ourselves, (*sips*) our praise we can't refuse it.
“Now Liss, read you—there at that dash and star—
“Yes, Ma'am—A certain Lord had best beware,
“Who lives not twenty miles from Grosvenor-square:
“For should he Lady W. find willing—
“*Wormwood* is bitter.”——“Oh! that's me—the villain!
“Throw it behind the fire, and never more
“Let that vile paper come within my door.”

Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the dart,
To reach *our* feelings we ourselves must smart.
Is our young bard so young, to think that he
Can stop the full spring tide of calumny?
Knows he the world so little, and its trade?
Alas! the devil's sooner *rais'd* than *laid*.
So strong, so swift the monster, there's no gagging;
Cut Scandal's head off—still the tongue is wagging.
Proud of your smiles, once lavishly bestow'd,
Again our young Don Quixote takes the road,
To shew his gratitude, he draws his pen,
And seeks this Hydra, Scandal, in its den;
From his fell gripe the frightened fair to save—
Tho' he should fall, th' attempt must please the brave,
For your applause, all perils he would through;
He'll fight—that's write—a cavaliero true,
Till every drop of blood—that's ink—is spilt for you.

T H E
SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL,
A COMEDY.

A C T I.

SCENE, Lady SNEERWELL's House.

Lady SNEERWELL and SNAKE discovered at a Tea Table.

Lady Sneerwell.

THE paragraphs, you say, Mr Snake, were all inserted.

Snake. They were, madam; and as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion from whence they came.

L. Sneer. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with captain Boastall?

Snake. That's in as fine a train as your Ladyship could wish, in the common course of things. I think it must reach Mrs Clacket's ears within twenty-four hours, and then the business, you know, is as good as done.

L. Sneer. Why yes, Mrs Clacket has talents, and a good deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day; to my knowledge, she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons disinherited; of four forced elopements, as many close confinements, nine separate maintenances,

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and two divorces ;—nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tete-a-tete* in the Town and Country Magazine, when the parties never saw one another before in their lives.

L. Sneer. Why yes, she has genius, but her manner is too gross.

Snake. True, madam, she has a fine tongue, and a bold invention; but then, her colouring is too dark, and the outlines rather too extravagant; she wants that delicacy of hint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguishes your ladyship's scandal.

L. Sneer. You are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least; every body will allow that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or a look, than many others with the most laboured detail, even though they accidentally happened to have a little truth on their side to support it.

L. Sneer. Yes, my dear Snake, and I'll not deny the pleasure I have at the success of my schemes; (*both rise*) wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess nothing can give me greater satisfaction, than reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

Snake. True, madam; but there is one affair, in which you have lately employed me, wherein I confess I am at a loss to guess at your motives.

L. Sneer. I presume you mean with regard to my friend Sir Peter Teazle, and his family.

Snake. I do; here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as guardian since their father's death; the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of; the youngest the most dissipated, wild, extravagant young fellow in the world; the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship, and apparently your favourite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly admired by her: Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a city knight, with a large fortune, should not immediately close with the
passion

passion of a man of such character and expectation as Mr Surface; and more so, why you are so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

L. Sneer. Then at once, to unravel this mystery, I must inform you, that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr Surface and me.

Snake. No!—

L. Sneer. No: His real views are to Maria, or her fortune, while in his brother he finds a favoured rival; he is, therefore, obliged to mask his real intentions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself for his success.

L. Sneer. Heavens! how dull you are! Can't you surmise a weakness I have hitherto, through shame, concealed even from you? Must I confess it, that Charles, that profligate, that libertine, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation, that he it is for whom I am anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice every thing.

Snake. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent; but pray, how came you and Mr Surface so confidential?

L. Sneer. For our mutual interest: he pretends to, and recommends, sentiment and liberality; but I know him to be artful, close and malicious. In short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and, indeed with most of his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of virtue, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. Yes, I know Sir Peter vows he has not his fellow in England, and has praised him as a man of character and sentiment.

L. Sneer. Yes; and with the appearance of being sentimental, he has brought Sir Peter to favour his addresses to Maria, while poor Charles has no friend in the house, though I fear he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

Enter

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mr Surface, madam.

L. Sneer. Shew him up; (*Exit servant*) he generally calls about this hour—I don't wonder at people's giving him to me for a lover.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE.

Jos. Lady Sneerwell, good morning to you—Mr Snake, your most obedient.

L. Sneer. Snake has just been rallying me upon our attachment, but I have told him our real views; I need not tell you how useful he has been to us, and believe me, our confidence has not been ill placed.

Jos. Oh, madam, 'tis impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr Snake's merit and accomplishments.

L. Sneer. Oh, no compliments; but tell me when you saw Maria, or, what's more material to us, your brother.

Jos. I have not seen either since I left you, but I can tell you they never meet; some of your stories have had a good effect in that quarter.

L. Sneer. The merit of this, my dear Snake, belongs to you; but do your brother's distresses increafe?

Jos. Every hour; I am told he had another execution in his house yesterday—In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed any thing I ever heard.

L. Sneer. Poor Charles!

Jos. Aye, poor Charles indeed! notwithstanding his extravagance one cannot help pitying him; I wish it was in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not feel for the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves to be——

L. Sneer. Now you are going to be moral, and forget you are among friends.

Jos. Gad, so I was, ha! ha!—I'll keep that sentiment 'till I see Sir Peter, ha! ha! however, it would certainly be a generous act in you to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed at all, can only be so by a person of your superior accomplishments and understanding.

Snake.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming; I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to your ladyship. Mr Surface, your most obedient. (*Exit.*)

Jos. Mr Snake, your most obedient. I wonder, Lady Sneerwell, you would put any confidence in that fellow.

L. Sneer. Why so?

Jos. I have discovered he has of late had several conferences with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward; he has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

L. Sneer. And would you think he would betray us?

Jos. Not unlikely; and take my word for it, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow has not virtue enough to be faithful to his own villainies.

Enter MARIA.

L. Sneer. Ah, Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

Mar. Nothing, madam, only this odious lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and his uncle Crabtree, just called in at my guardian's; but I took the first opportunity to slip out, and run away to your Ladyship.

L. Sneer. Is that all?

Jos. Had my brother Charles been of the party, you would not have been so much alarmed.

L. Sneer. Nay, now you are too severe; for I dare say the truth of the matter is, Maria heard you was here, and therefore came; but pray, Maria, what particular objection have you to Sir Benjamin that you avoid him so?

Mar. Oh, madam, he has done nothing; but his whole conversation is a perpetual libel upon all his acquaintance.

Jos. Yes, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him, for he would abuse a stranger as soon as his best friend, and his uncle is as bad.

Mar.

Snake.

Mar. For my part, I own wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice;—what think you, Mr Surface?

Jos. To be sure, madam,—to smile at a jest, that plants a thorn in the breast of another, is to become a principal in the mischief.

L. Sneer. Psha—there is no possibility of being witty without a little ill nature; the malice in a good thing is the band that makes it stick.—What is your real opinion, Mr Surface?

Jos. Why my opinion is, that where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, the conversation must be naturally insipid.

Mar. Well, I will not argue how far slander may be allowed; but in a man, I am sure it is despicable.—We have pride, envy, rivalry, and a thousand motives to depreciate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman, before he can traduce one.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mrs Candour, madam, if you are at leisure, will leave her carriage.

L. Sneer. Desire her to walk up. (*Exit Servant.*) Now, Maria, here's a character to your taste; though Mrs Candour is a little talkative, yet every body allows she is the best natured sort of woman in the world.

Mar. Yes—with the very gross affectation of good nature, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Jos. Faith it's very true; and whenever I hear the current of abuse running hard against the character of my best friends, I never think them in such danger, as when Candour undertakes their defence.

L. Sneer. Hush! hush! here she is.

Enter Mrs CANDOUR.

Mrs Cand. Oh! my dear Lady Sneerwell; well, how do you? Mr Surface, your most obedient.—Is there any news abroad? No! nothing good I suppose.—No, nothing but scandal!—nothing but scandal!

Jos. Just so indeed, madam.

Mrs Cand.

School for Scandal.

11

Mrs Cand. Nothing but scandal! Ah, Maria, how do you do, child? what! is every thing at an end between you and Charles? What! is he too extravagant?—Aye! the town talks of nothing else.

Mar. I am sorry, madam, the town is so ill employed.

Mrs Cand. Aye, so am I, child—but what can one do? we can't stop people's tongues.—They hint too, that your guardian and his lady don't live so agreeably together as they did.

Mar. I am sure such reports are without foundation.

Mrs Cand. Aye, so things generally are:—It's like Mrs Fashion's affair with Colonel Coterie: though, indeed, that affair was never rightly cleared up; and it was but yesterday Miss Prim assured me, that Mr and Mrs Honeymoon are now become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted, that a certain widow in the next street had got rid of her dropsy, and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner.

Jos. The licence of invention some people give themselves, is astonishing.

Mrs Cand. 'Tis so—but how will you stop people's tongues? 'Twas but yesterday Mrs Clacket informed me, that our old friend Miss Prudely was going to elope, and that her guardian caught her just stepping into the York Diligence, with her dancing master. I was informed too, that Lord Flimsy caught his wife at a house of no extraordinary fame, and that Tom Saunter and Sir Harry Idle were to measure swords on a similar occasion.—But I dare say there is no truth in the story, and I would not circulate such a report for the world.

Jos. You report! No, no, no.

Mrs Cand. No, no,—tale-bearers are just as bad as the tale makers.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Benjamin Backbite and Mr Crabtree.

[Exit Servant.]

Enter

Mrs Cand.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN and CRABTREE.

Crab. Lady Sneerwell, your most obedient humble servant; Mrs Candour, I believe you don't know my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite; he has a very pretty taste for poetry, and shall make a rebus or a charade with any one.

Sir Benj. Oh fie! uncle.

Crab. In faith he will: did you ever hear the lines he made at Lady Ponto's rout, on Mrs Frizzle's feathers catching fire; and the rebuses——his first is the name of a fish; the next a great naval commander, and——

Sir Benj. Uncle, now pr'ythee.

L. Sneer. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish any thing.

Sir Benj. Why, to say the truth, 'tis very vulgar to print—and as my little productions are chiefly satires, and lampoons on particular persons, I find they circulate better by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties;——however, I have some love elegies, which when favoured by this lady's smiles, (*to Maria*) I mean to give to the public.

Crab. 'Foregad, madam, they'll immortalize you, (*to Maria*) you will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Saccarissa.

Sir Benj. Yes, madam, I think you'll like them, (*to Maria*) when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto type, where a neat rivulet of text shall murmur through a meadow of margin;——'Foregad, they'll be the most elegant things of their kind.

Crab. But, odso, Ladies, did you hear the news?

Mrs Cand. What—do you mean the report of—

Crab. No, madam, that's not it—Miss Nicely going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs Cand. Impossible!

Sir Benj. 'Tis very true indeed, madam; every thing is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

Crab. Yes, and they do say there were very pressing reasons for it.

Mrs Cand. I heard something of this before.

L. Sneer,

L. Sneer. Oh ! it cannot be ; and I wonder they'd report such a thing of so prudent a lady.

Sir Benj. Oh ! but madam, that is the very reason that it was believed at once ; for she has always been so very cautious and reserved, that every body was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Cand. It is true, there is a sort of puny, sickly reputation, that would outlive the robusiter character of an hundred prudes.

Sir Benj. True, madam ; there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution, who being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supplying their want of stamina by care and circumstances, have often given rise to the most ingenious tales.

Crab. Very true ;—but odso, ladies, did you hear of Miss Letitia Piper's losing her lover and her character at Scarborough.—Sir Benjamin, you remember it.

Sir Benj. Oh, to be sure, the most whimsical circumstance.

L. Sneer. Pray let us hear it.

Crab. Why, one evening, at Lady Spadille's assembly, the conversation happened to turn upon the difficulty of breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country ; no, says a lady present, I have seen an instance of it, for a cousin of mine, Miss Letitia Piper, had one that produced twins. What, what, says old Lady Dundizzy, (whom we all know is as deaf as a post) has Miss Letitia Piper had twins—This, you may easily imagine, set the company in a loud laugh ; and the next morning it was every where reported, and believed, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and girl.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha !

Crab. 'Tis true, upon my honour.—Oh, Mr Surface, how do you do ? I hear your uncle, Sir Oliver, is expected in town ; sad news upon his arrival, to hear how your brother has gone on.

Josf. I hope no busy people have already prejudiced his uncle against him—he may reform.

Sir Benj. True, he may ; for my part, I never thought him so utterly void of principle as people say,

and though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of amongst the Jews.

Crab. Foregad, if the Old Jewry was a ward, Charles would be an alderman, for he pays as many annuities as the Irish Tontine; and when he is sick, they have prayers for his recovery in all the Synagogues.

Sir Benj. Yet no man lives in greater splendor.—They tell me, when he entertains his friends, he can sit down to dinner with a dozen of securities, his own have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antichamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Jos. This may be entertaining to you, gentlemen; but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

Mar. Their malice is intolerable. (*Aside.*) Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning; I'm not very well. [*Exit Maria.*]

Mrs Cand. She changes colour.

L. Sneer. Do, Mrs Candour, follow her.

Mrs Cand. To be sure I will;—poor dear girl, who knows what her situation may be. [*Mrs Cand. follows her.*]

L. Sneer. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

Sir Benj. The young lady's penchant is obvious.

Crab. Come, don't let this dishearten you—follow her, and repeat some of your odes to her, and I'll assist you.

Sir Benj. Mr Surface, I did not mean to hurt you, but depend on't, your brother is utterly undone.

Crab. Oh! undone as ever man was—can't raise a guinea.

Sir Benj. Every thing is sold, I am told, that was moveable.

Crab. Not a moveable left, except some old bottles, and some pictures, and they seem to be framed in the wainscot, egad.

Sir Benj. I am sorry to hear also some bad stories of him.

Crab. Oh! he has done many mean things, that's certain.

Sir Benj. But, however, he's your brother.

Crab.

Crab. Aye! as he is your brother—we'll tell you more another opportunity. [*Exeunt Crab. and Sir Benj.*]

L. Sneer. 'Tis very hard for them, indeed, to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

Jos. And I fancy their abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than to Maria.

L. Sneer. I doubt her affections are farther engaged than we imagine;—but the family are to be here this afternoon, so you may as well dine where you are; we shall have an opportunity of observing her further;—in the mean time I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE, Sir PETER TEAZLE'S House.

Enter Sir PETER TEAZLE.

Sir Pet. When an old batchelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect?—'Tis now above six months since my Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men—and I have been the most miserable dog ever since.—We tisted a little going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells were done ringing. I was more than once nearly choaked with gall during the honey-moon, and had lost every satisfaction in life, before my friends had done wishing me joy.—And yet, I chose with caution a girl bred wholly in the country, who had never known luxury, beyond one silk gown, or dissipation beyond the annual gala of a race ball.—Yet now, she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the town, with as good a grace as if she had never seen a bush, or a grass plot out of Grosvenor-Square.—I am sneered at by all my acquaintance—paragraped in the newspapers—she dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humours.—And yet, the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this—but I am determined never to be weak enough to let her know it—No! No! No!

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowl. Sir Peter, your servant, how do find yourself to-day?

B 2

Sir Pet.

Crab.

Sir Pet. Very bad, Mr Rowley; very bad indeed.

Rowl. I'm sorry to hear that—what has happened to make you uneasy since yesterday?

Sir Pet. A pretty question truly to a married man.

Rowl. Sure my Lady is not the cause!

Sir Pet. Why! has any one told you she was dead?

Rowl. Come, come, Sir Peter, notwithstanding you sometimes dispute and disagree, I am sure you love her.

Sir Pet. Aye, Mr Rowley; but the worst of it is, that in all our disputes and quarrels, she is ever in the wrong, and continues to thwart and vex me;—I am myself the sweetest tempered man in the world, and so I tell her an hundred times a-day.

Rowl. Indeed, Sir Peter!

Sir Pet. Yes—and then there's Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage her to disobedience; and Maria, my ward, she too presumes to have a will of her own, and refuses the man I propose to her; designing, I suppose, to bestow herself and fortune upon that profligate his brother.

Rowl. You know, Sir Peter, I have often taken the liberty to differ in opinion with you, in regard to these two young men; for Charles, my life on't, will retrieve all one day or other.—Their worthy father, my once honoured master, at his years, was full as wild and extravagant as Charles now is; but at his death, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

Sir Pet. You are wrong, master Rowley, you are very wrong:—by their father's will, you know, I became guardian to these young men, which gave me an opportunity of knowing their different dispositions; but their uncle's eastern liberality soon took them out of my power, by giving them an early independence.—But for Charles, whatever good qualities he may have inherited, they are long since squandered away with the rest of his fortune; Joseph, indeed, is a pattern for the young men of the age—a youth of the noblest sentiments, and acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Rowl.

Rowl. Well, well, Sir Peter, I shan't oppose your opinion at present, though I am sorry you are prejudiced against Charles, as this may probably be the most critical period of his life, for his uncle, Sir Oliver, is arrived, and now in town.

Sir Pet. What! my old friend, Sir Oliver, is he arrived? I thought you had not expected him this month.

Rowl. No more we did, Sir, but his passage has been remarkably quick.

Sir Pet. I shall be heartily glad to see him—'Tis sixteen years since old Nol and I met—But does he still enjoin us to keep his arrival a secret from his nephews?

Rowl. He does, Sir; and is determined, under a feigned character, to make trial of their different dispositions.

Sir Pet. Ah! there is no need of it, for Joseph, I am sure, is the man—But hark'ye, Rowley, does Sir Oliver know that I am married?

Rowl. He does, Sir, and intends shortly to wish you joy.

Sir Pet. What, as we wish health to a friend in a consumption—But I must have him at my house—do you conduct him, Rowley, I'll go and give orders for his reception (*going.*) We used to rail at matrimony together—he has stood firm to his text.—But, Rowley, don't give him the least hint that my wife and I disagree, for I would have him think (heaven forgive me) that we are a very happy couple.

Rowl. Then you must be careful not to quarrel whilst he is here.

Sir Pet. And so we must—but that will be impossible!—Zounds, Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves,—aye, he deserves—no, the crime carries the punishment along with it.

ACT II.

SCENE, Sir PETER TEAZLE'S House.

Enter Sir PETER and Lady TEAZLE.

Sir PETER.

LADY Teazle, Lady Teazle, I won't bear it.

L. Teaz. Very well, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, just as you please; but I know I ought to have my own way in every thing, and what's more, I will.*Sir Pet.* What, madam! is there no respect due to the authority of a husband?*L. Teaz.* Why, don't I know that no woman of fashion does as she is bid after her marriage.—Though I was bred in the country, I am no stranger to that: if you wanted me to have been obedient, you should have adopted me, and not married me—I'm sure you were old enough.*Sir Pet.* Aye, there it is.—Oons, madam, what right have you to run into all this extravagance?*L. Teaz.* I am sure I am not more extravagant than a woman of quality ought to be.*Sir Pet.* 'Slife, madam, I'll have no more sums squandered away upon such unmeaning luxuries; you have as many flowers in your dressing room, as would turn the Pantheon into a green house; or make a Fete Champetre at a mas——*L. Teaz.* Lord, Sir Peter, am I to blame that flowers don't blow in cold weather? you must blame the climate, and not me—I'm sure, for my part, I wish it was Spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet.*Sir Pet.* Zounds, madam, I should not wonder at your extravagance if you had been bred to it—Had you any of these things before you married me?*L. Teaz.* Lord, Sir Peter, how can you be angry at those little elegant expences?

Sir

Sir Pet. Had you any of those little elegant expences when you married me?

L. Teaz. For my part, I think you ought to be pleased your wife should be thought a woman of taste.

Sir Pet. Zounds, madam, you had no taste when you married me.

L. Teaz. Very true, indeed; and after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again.

Sir Pet. Very well, very well, madam; you have entirely forgot what your situation was when first I saw you.

L. Teaz. No, no, I have not; a very disagreeable situation it was, or I am sure I never should have married you.

Sir Pet. You forget the humble state I took you from—the daughter of a poor country 'Squire—When I came to your father's, I found you sitting at your tambour, in a linen gown, a bunch of keys at your side, and your hair combed smoothly over a roll.

L. Teaz. Yes I remember very well;—my daily occupations were to overlook the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lap dog.

Sir Pet. Oh! I am glad to find you have so good a recollection.

L. Teaz. My evening employments were to draw patterns for ruffles, which I had no materials to make up; play at Pope Joan with the curate; read a sermon to my aunt Deborah, or perhaps be stuck up at an old spinnet to thrum my father to sleep after a fox chase.

Sir Pet. Then you was glad to take a ride out behind the butler, upon the old dock'd coach horse.

L. Teaz. No, no; I deny the butler and the coach horse.

Sir Pet. I say you did. This was your situation—Now, madam, you must have your coach, vis-a-vis, and three powdered footmen to walk before your chair; and in summer, two white cats to draw you to Kensington gardens; and instead of your living in that hole in the country, I have brought you home here,
made

made you a woman of fortune and of quality—in short, madam, I have made you my wife.

L. Teaz. Well, and there is but one thing more you can now do to add to the obligation, and that is——

Sir Pet. To make you my widow, I suppose.

L. Teaz. Hem!——

Sir Pet. Very well, madam, very well; I am much obliged to you for the hint.)

L. Teaz. Why then will you force me to say shocking things to you. But now we have finished our morning conversation, I presume I may go to my engagements at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir Pet. Lady Sneerwell!—a precious acquaintance you have made her too, and the set that frequent her house.—Such a set, mercy on us! Many a wretch who has been drawn upon a hurdle, has done less mischief than those barterers of forged lies, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

L. Teaz. How can you be so severe; I'm sure they are all people of fashion, and very tenacious of reputation.

Sir Pet. Yes, so tenacious of it, they'll not allow it to any but themselves.

L. Teaz. I vow, Sir Peter, when I say an ill natur'd thing, I mean no harm by it, for I take it for granted they'd do the same by me.

Sir Pet. They've made you as bad as any of them.

L. Teaz. Yes—I think I bear my part with a tolerable grace——

Sir Pet. Grace indeed!

L. Teaz. Well, but, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come.

Sir Pet. Well I shall just call in to look after my own character.

L. Teaz. Then, upon my word, you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. (*Exit L. Teazle.*)

Sir Pet. I have got much by my intended expostulation—What a charming air she has!—what a neck, and how pleasingly she shews her contempt of my authority!——Well, though I can't make her love me,
'tis

'tis some pleasure to teaze her a little, and I think she never appears to such advantage, as when she is doing every thing to vex and plague me.

SCENE, LADY SNEERWELL'S House.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL, CRABTREE, SIR BENJAMIN, JOSEPH, MRS CANDOUR, and MARIA.

L. Sneer. Nay, positively we'll have it.

Jos. Aye, aye, the epigram by all means.

Sir Benj. Oh! plague on it, it's mere nonsense.

Crab. Faith, ladies, 'twas excellent for an extempore.

Sir Benj. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstances——You must know that one day last week, as Lady Bab Curriple was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of duodecimo phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which I took out my pocket book, and in a moment produced the following:——

“ Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies,

‘ Other horses are clowns, and these macaronies;

‘ To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,

‘ Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.”

Crab. There ladies,——done in the crack of a whip—and on horseback too.

Jos. Oh! a very Phœbus mounted——

Mrs Cand. I must have a copy.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

L. Sneer. Lady Teazle, how do you do?—I hope we shall see Sir Peter.

L. Teaz. I believe he shall wait on your ladyship presently.

L. Sneer. Maria, my love, you look grave; come, you shall sit down to picquer with Mr Surface.

Mar. I take very little pleasure in cards—but I'll do as your Ladyship pleases.

L. Teaz. I wonder he would sit down to cards with Maria.——I thought he would have taken an opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came. (*Aside.*

Mrs Cand.

Mrs Cand. Well, now I'll forswear his society. (*Aside.*

L. Teaz. What's the matter, Mrs Candour?

Mrs Cand. Why, they are so censorious they won't allow our friend, Miss Vermilion, to be handsome.

L. Sneer. Oh, surely she's a pretty woman.

Crab. I'm glad you think so,

Mrs Cand. She has a charming fresh colour.

L. Teaz. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs Cand. Well, I'll swear 'tis natural, for I've seen it come and go.

L. Teaz. Yes, it comes at night, and goes again in the morning.

Sir Benj. True, madam, it not only goes and comes, but what's more, her maid can fetch and carry it.

Mrs Cand. Well,---and what do you think of her sister?

Crab. What, Mrs Evergreen---'foregad, she's six and fifty if she is a day.

Mrs Cand. Nay, I'll swear two or three and sixty is the outside-----I don't think she looks more.

Sir Benj. Oh, there's no judging by her looks, unless we could see her face.

L. Sneer. Well, if Mrs Evergreen does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, she certainly effects it with great ingenuity, and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Oaker chalks her wrinkles.

Sir Benj. Nay, now, my Lady Sneerwell, you are too severe upon the widow---Come, it is not that she paints so ill, but when she has finished her face, she joins it so badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur may see at once, that the head is modern, though the trunk is antique.

Crab. What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir Benj. Why she has pretty teeth.

L. Teaz. Yes, and upon that account never shuts her mouth, but keeps it always a-jar, as it were, thus (*shows her teeth.*)

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha.

L. Teaz.

L. Teaz. And, yet I vow that's better than the pains Mrs Prim takes to conceal the loss in front—she draws her mouth till it resembles the aperture of a poor box, and all her words appear to slide out edge-ways as it were thus——“*How do you do, madam?—Yes, madam.*”

L. Sneer. Ha, ha, ha; very well, Lady Teazle—I vow you appear to be a little severe.

L. Teaz. In defence of a friend, you know, it is but just—But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir Pet. Ladies, your servant—mercy upon me! The whole set—a character dead at every sentence. [*Aside.*

Mrs Cand. They won't allow good qualities to any one—not even good nature to our friend Mrs Purfey.

Crab. What! the old fat dowager that was at Mrs Quadrille's last night.

Mrs Cand. Her bulk is her misfortune; and when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

L. Sneer. That's very true indeed.

L. Teaz. Yes.—I'm told she absolutely lives upon acids and small whey, laces herself with pullies;—often in the hottest day of summer, you will see her on a little squat poney, with her hair plaited and turned up like a drummer, and away she goes puffing round the ring in a full trot.

Sir Pet. Mercy on me! this is her own relation; a person they dine with twice a-week. [*Aside.*

Mrs Cand. I vow you shan't be so severe upon the dowager; for let me tell you, great allowances are to be made for a woman who strives to pass for a flirt at six and thirty.

L. Sneer. Though surely she's handsome still; and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candle light, 'tis not to be wondered at.

Mrs Cand. Very true; and for her manner, I think it very graceful, considering she never had any education; for her mother, you know, was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar baker at Bristol.

Sir. Benj.

Mrs Cand. Well, now I'll forswear his society. (*Aside.*)

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Sir. Benj.

Sir Benj. Aye, you are both of ye too good natured.

Mrs Cand. Well, I never will join in the ridicule of a friend; so I tell my cousin Ogle, and ye all know what pretensions she has to beauty.

Crab. She has the oddest countenance—a collection of features from all the corners of the globe.

Sir Benj. She has indeed, an Irish front.

Crab. Caledonian locks.

Sir Benj. Dutch nose.

Crab. Austrian lips.

Sir Benj. The complexion of a Spaniard.

Crab. And teeth a la Chinoise.

Sir Benj. In short, her face resembles a table d'hôte at Spa, where no two guests are of a nation.

Crab. Or a congress at the close of a general war, where every member seems to have a different interest, and the nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Sir Benj. Ha, ha, ha.

L. Sneer. Ha, ha—Well, I vow you are a couple of provoking toads.

Mrs Cand. Well, I vow you shan't carry the laugh so,—let me tell you that, Mrs Ogle.

Sir Pet. Madam, madam, 'tis impossible to stop those good gentlemen's tongues; but when I tell you, Mrs Candour, that the lady they are speaking of is a particular friend of mine, I hope you will be so good as not to undertake her defence.

L. Sneer. Well said, Sir Peter; but you are a cruel creature, too phlegmatic yourself for a wit, and too peevish to allow it to others.

Sir Pet. True wit, madam, is more nearly allied to good nature than you are aware of.

L. Teaz. True, Sir Peter; I believe they are so near a-kin that they can never be united.

Sir Benj. Or rather, madam, suppose them to be man and wife, one so seldom sees them together.

L. Teaz. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by parliament.

Sir Pet. Foregad, madam, if they considered the sporting with reputations of as much consequence as poaching

poaching on manors, and passed an act for the preservation of fame, they would find many would thank them for the bill.

L. Sneer. O lud!—Sir Peter would deprive us of our privileges.

Sir Pet. Yes, madam; and none should then have the liberty to kill characters, and run down reputations, but *privileged* old maids, and *disappointed* widows.

L. Sneer. Go, you monster!

Mrs Cand. But surely you would not be so severe on those who report what they hear?

Sir Pet. Yes, madam, I would have law for them too; and wherever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured party should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crab. Well, I verily believe there never was a scandalous story without some foundation.

Sir Pet. Nine out of ten are formed on some malicious invention, or idle representation.

L. Sneer. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

Enter a SERVANT who whispers SIR PETER.

Sir Pet. I'll come directly—I'll steal away unperceived. [*Aside.*]

L. Sneer. Sir Peter, you're not leaving us.

Sir Pet. I beg pardon, ladies, 'tis particular business, and I must—But I leave my character behind me. [*Exit.*]

Sir Benj. Well, certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being; I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily, if he was not your husband.

L. Teaz. Oh, never mind that.—This way.

[*They walk up and exeunt.*]

Jos. You take no pleasure in this society.

Mar. How can I! If to raise a malicious smile at the misfortunes and infirmities of those who are unhappy, be a proof of wit and humour, Heaven grant me a double portion of dulness.

Jos. And yet they have no malice in their hearts.

C

Mar.

Mar. Then it is the more inexcusable, since nothing but an ungovernable depravity of heart could tempt them to such a practice.

Jos. And is it possible, Maria, that you can thus feel for others, and yet be cruel to me alone?—Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Mar. Why will you persist to persecute me on a subject on which you have long since known my sentiments.

Jos. O Maria, you would not be thus deaf to me, but that Charles, that libertine, is still a favoured rival.

Mar. Ungenerously urged! but whatever my sentiments are, with regard to that unfortunate young man, be assured, I shall not consider myself more bound to give him up, because his misfortunes have lost him the regards—even of a brother—[*Going out.*]

Jos. Nay, Maria, you shall not leave me with a frown; by all that's honest I swear—[*Kneels and sees Lady Teazle behind.*] Ah! Lady Teazle, ah! you shall not stir—[*To Maria*] I have the greatest regard in the world for Lady Teazle, but if Sir Peter was once to suspect—

Mar. Lady Teazle!—

L. Teaz. What is all this child? You are wanted in the next room. [*Exit Maria.*]—What is the meaning of all this?—What! did you take her for me!

Jos. Why, you must know—Maria—by some means suspecting—the great regard I entertain for your ladyship—was threatening—if I did not desist, to acquaint Sir Peter—and I—I—was just reasoning with her—

L. Teaz. You seem to have adopted a very tender method of reasoning—pray, do you usually argue on your knees?

Jos. Why, you know she's but a child, and I thought a little bombast might be useful to keep her silent.—But, my dear Lady Teazle, when will you come and give me your opinion of my library?

L. Teaz. Why I really begin to think it not so proper: and you know I admit you as lover no farther than fashion dictates.

Jos.

Jos. Oh, no more ;—a mere Platonic Cicerone, that every lady is entitled to.

L. Teaz. No further—and though Sir Peter's treatment may make me uneasy, it shall never provoke me—

Jos. To the only revenge in your power.

L. Teaz. Go, you insinuating wretch—but we shall be missed, let us join the company.

Jos. I'll follow your ladyship.

L. Teaz. Don't stay long, for I promise you Maria shan't come to hear any more of your reasoning. [*Exit.*]

Jos. A pretty situation I am in—by gaining the wife I shall lose the heiress—I at first intended to make her ladyship only the instrument in my designs on Maria, but—I don't know how it is—I am become her serious admirer.—I begin now to wish I had not made a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has brought me into so many confounded rogueries, that I fear I shall be exposed at last. [*Exit.*]

SCENE, SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House.

Enter SIR OLIVER and ROWLEY.

Sir Oliv. Ha ha, and so my old friend is married at last, eh ! Rowley—and to a young wife out of the country, ha, ha, ha ! That he should buff to old batchelors so long, and sink into a husband at last.

Rowl. But let me beg of you, sir, not to rally him upon the subject, for he cannot bear it, though he has been married these seven months.

Sir Oliv. Then he has just been half a year on the stool of repentance. Poor Sir Peter !—But you say he has entirely given up Charles—never sees him, eh ?

Rowl. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I believe is greatly aggravated by a suspicion of a connection between Charles and lady Teazle, and such a report I know has been circulated and kept up, by means of Lady Sneerwell, and a scandalous party who associate at her house ; where, I am convinced, if there is any partiality in the case, Joseph is the favourite.

Sir Oliv. Aye, aye — I know there is a set of mischievous prating gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and rob a young fellow of his good name, before he has sense enough to know the value of it: — But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by any such, I promise you — No, no, if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Rowl. I rejoice, sir, to hear you say so; and am happy to find the son of my old master has one friend left however.

Sir Oliv. What! shall I forget, Mr Rowley, when I was at his years myself; — egad, neither my brother nor I were very prudent youths, and yet I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

Rowl. 'Tis that reflection I build my hopes on — and, my life on't! Charles will prove deserving of your kindness. — But here comes Sir Peter.

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir Pet. Where is he? Where is Sir Oliver? — Ah, my dear friend, I rejoice to see you! — You are welcome to England a thousand — and a thousand times! —

Sir Oliv. Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter — and I am glad to find you so well, believe me.

Sir Pet. Ah, Sir Oliver! — It's sixteen years since last we saw one another — many a bout we have had together in our time!

Sir Oliv. Aye! I have had my share. — But what, I find you are married — hey, old boy! — Well, well, it can't be helped, and so I wish you joy with all my heart.

Sir Pet. Thank you, thank you — Yes, Sir Oliver, I have entered into that happy state — but we won't talk of that now.

Sir Oliv. That's true, Sir Peter, old friends should not begin upon grievances at their first meeting, no, no, no.

Rowl. [*Aside to Sir Oliver*] Have a care, sir; — don't touch upon that subject.

Sir Oliv.

Sir Oliv. Well,—so one of my nephews, I find, is a wild young rogue.

Sir Pet. Oh, my dear friend, I grieve at your disappointment there—Charles is, indeed, a sad libertine—but no matter, Joseph will make you ample amends—every body speaks well of him.

Sir Oliv. I am sorry to hear it ; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow.—Every body speaks well of him—pshaw—then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools, as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

Sir Pet. What the plague ! are you angry with Joseph for not making enemies ?

Sir Oliv. Why not, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

Sir Pet. Well, we'll see him, and you'll be convinced how worthy he is.—He's a pattern for all the young men of the age.—He's a man of the noblest sentiments.

Sir Oliv. Oh ! plague of his sentiments—if he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly.—But don't however mistake me, Sir Peter ; I don't mean to defend Charles's errors ; but before I form a judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts, and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for that purpose.

Sir Pet. My life on Joseph's honour.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, gives us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink your lady's health, and tell you all our schemes.

Sir Pet. Allons—done.

Sir Oliv. And don't, Sir Peter, be too severe against your old friend's son—Odds my life, I am not sorry he has run a little out of the course—for my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth ; 'tis like ivy round the sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree.

(Exeunt.)

ACT III.

SCENE, SIR PETER'S House.

Enter SIR PETER, SIR OLIVER, and ROWLEY.

SIR PETER.

WELL, well, we'll see this man first, and then have our wine afterwards.—But Rowley, I don't see the jest of your scheme.

Rowl. Why, sir, this Mr Stanley was a near relation of their mother's; and formerly an eminent merchant in Dublin—he failed in trade, and is greatly reduced; he has applied by letter to Mr Surface and Charles for assistance—from the former of whom he has received nothing but fair promises; while Charles, in the midst of his own distresses, is at present endeavouring to raise a sum of money, part of which I know he intends for the use of Mr Stanley.

Sir Oliv. Aye—he's my brother's son.

Rowl. Now, Sir, we propose, that Sir Oliver shall visit them both, in the character of Mr Stanley; as I have informed them he has obtained leave of his creditors to wait on his friends in person—and in the younger, believe me, you'll find one, who, in the midst of dissipation and extravagance, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it, *A tear for pity, and a hand open as day for melting charity.*

Sir Pet. What signifies his open hand and purse, if he has nothing to give. But where is this person you were speaking of?

Rowl. Below, sir, waiting your commands—You must know, Sir Oliver, this is a friendly Jew; one who, to do him justice, has done every thing in his power to assist Charles—Who waits?—*(Enter a Servant)* Desire Mr Moses to walk up. *Exit Servant.*

Sir Pet. But how are you sure he'll speak truth?

Rowl. Why, sir, I have persuaded him there's no prospect of his being paid several sums he has advanced for Charles, but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is in town; therefore you may depend

on

on his being faithful to his interest—Oh! here comes the honest Israelite.

Enter MOSES.

Sir Oliver, this is Mr Moses.—Mr Moses, this is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew Charles.

Mos. Yes, Sir Oliver—I have done all I could for him—but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliv. That was unlucky truly, for you had no opportunity of shewing your talent.

Mos. None at all; I had not the pleasure of knowing his distresses, 'till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliv. Unfortunate indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him.

Mos. Yes, he knows that—This very evening I was to have brought a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will advance him some monies.

Sir Pet. What! a person that Charles has never borrowed money of before, lend him any in his present circumstances.

Mos. Yes—

Sir Oliv. What is the gentleman's name?

Mos. Mr Premium, of Crutehed Friars, formerly a broker.

Sir Pet. Does he know Mr Premium?

Mos. Not at all.

Sir Pet. A thought strikes me—Suppose, Sir Oliver, you was to visit him in that character; 'twill be much better than the romantic one of an old relation; you will then have an opportunity of seeing Charles in all his glory.

Sir Oliv. Egad, I like that idea better than the other, and then I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.

Rowl. Gentlemen, this is taking Charles rather un-awares; but Moses, you understand Sir Oliver; and I dare say you will be faithful.

Mos.

Mos. You may depend upon me.—This is very near the time I was to have gone.

Sir Oliv. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses—But hold—I had forgot one thing—how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Mos. There is no need—the principal is a Christian.

Sir Oliv. Is he? I am very sorry for it—But then again, am I not too smartly dressed to look like a money lender?

Sir Pet. Not at all—it would not be out of character if you went in your own chariot: would it, Moses?

Mos. Not in the least.

Sir Oliv. Well, but how must I talk? There's certainly some cant of usury, or mode of treating, that I ought to know.

Sir Pet. As I take it, Sir Oliver, the great point is to be exorbitant in your demands.—Eh, Moses?

Mos. Yes, dat is very great point.

Sir Oliv. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that; eight or ten per cent. on the loan at least.

Mos. Oh! if you ask him no more as dat, you'll be discovered immediately.

Sir Oliv. Hey, what the plague—how much then?

Mos. That depends upon the circumstances—if he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent. but if you find him in great distress, and he wants money very bad—you must ask double.

Sir Pet. Upon my word, Sir Oliver——Mr Premium I mean—it's a very pretty trade you're learning.

Sir Oliv. Truly I think so; and not unprofitable.

Mos. Then you know you have not the money yourself, but are forced to borrow it of a friend.

Sir Oliv. O! I borrow it for him of a friend, do I?

Mos. Yes, and your friend's an unconscionable dog, but you can't help dat.

Sir Oliv. Oh! my friend's an unconscionable dog—is he?

Mos. And then he himself has not the monies by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

Sir Oliv.

Sir Oliv. He's forced to sell flock at a great loss;—well, really, that's very kind of him.

Sir Pet. But hark'ye, Moses, if Sir Oliver was to rail a little at the annuity bill, don't you think it would have a good effect?

Mos. Very much.

Rowl. And lament that a young man must now come to the years of discretion, before he has it in his power to ruin himself.

Mos. Aye! a great pity.

Sir Pet. Yes, and abuse the public for allowing merit to a bill, whose only object was to preserve youth and inexperience from the rapacious gripe of usury, and to give the young heir an opportunity of enjoying his fortune, without being ruined by coming into possession.

Sir Oliv. So,—so,—Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

Sir Pet. You'll scarce have time to learn your trade, for Charles lives but hard by.

Sir Oliv. Oh! never fear—my tutor appears so able, that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a compleat rogue before I have turned the corner. [*Exeunt Sir Oliver and Moses.*]

Sir Pet. So, Rowley, you should have been partial, and given Charles notice of our plot.

Rowl. No indeed, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. Well, I see Maria coming, I want to have some talk with her. [*Exit Rowley.*]

Enter MARIA.

So Maria, what, is Mr Surface come home with you?

Mar. No, Sir, he was engaged.

Sir Pet. Maria, I wish you were more sensible to his excellent qualities,—does not every time you are in his company convince you of the merit of that amiable young man?

Mar. You know, Sir Peter, I have often told you, that of all the men who have paid me a particular attention,

tension, there is not one I would not sooner prefer, than Mr Surface? }

Sir Pet. Aye, aye, this blindness to his merit proceeds from your attachment to that profligate brother of his.

Mar. This is unkind; you know, at your request, I have forbore to see or correspond with him, as I have long been convinced he is unworthy my regard; but while my reason condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his misfortunes.

Sir Pet. Ah! you had best resolve to think of him no more, but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Mar. Never to his brother.

Sir Pet. Have a care, Maria, I have not yet made you know what the authority of a guardian is; don't force me to exert it.

Mar. I know, that for a short time I am to obey you as my father,—but must cease to think you so, when you would compel me to be miserable. [*Exit in tears.*]

Sir Pet. Sure never man was plagued as I am; I had not been married above three weeks, before her father, a heal, hearty man died,—on purpose to plague me with his daughter; but here comes my help-mate, she seems in mighty good humour; I wish I could tease her into loving me a little.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

L. Teaz. What's the matter, Sir Peter? What have you done to Maria? It is not fair to quarrel and I not by.

Sir Pet. Ah! Lady Teazle, it is in your power to put me into a good humour at any time.

L. Teaz. Is it? I am glad of it—for I want you to be in a monstrous good humour now; come, do be good humoured, and let me have two hundred pounds.

Sir Pet. What the plague! can't I be in a good humour without paying for it,—but look always thus, and you shall want for nothing. (*Pulls out a pocket-book*) There, there's two hundred pounds for you, (*going to kiss*) now seal me a bond for the repayment.

L. Teaz.

L. Teaz. No, my note of hand will do as well.

[*Giving her band.*]

Sir Pet. Well, well, I must be satisfied with that,—you shan't much longer reproach me for not having made you a proper settlement—I intend shortly to surprise you.

L. Teaz. Do you? You can't think, Sir Peter, how good humour becomes you; now you look just as you did before I married you.

Sir Pet. Do I indeed?

L. Teaz. Don't you remember when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and asked me if I could like an old fellow, who could deny me nothing.

Sir Pet. Aye, and you were so attentive and obliging to me then.

L. Teaz. Aye, to be sure I was, and used to take your part against all my acquaintance; and when my cousin Sophy used to laugh at me, for thinking of marrying a man old enough to be my father, and call you an ugly, stiff, formal bachelor, I contradicted her, and said I did not think you so ugly by any means, and that I dar'd say you would make a good sort of a husband.

Sir Pet. That was very kind of you—Well, and you were not mistaken, you have found it so, have not you?—But shall we always live thus happy?

L. Teaz. With all my heart;—I'm—I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling—provided you will own you are tired first.

Sir Pet. With all my heart.

L. Teaz. Then we shall be happy as the day is long, and never, never—quarrel more.

Sir Pet. Never—never—never—and let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

L. Teaz. Aye!—

Sir Pet. But, my dear Lady Teazle—my love—indeed you must keep a strict watch over your temper—for you know, my dear, that in all our disputes and quarrels, you always begin first.

L. Teaz.

L. Teaz. No, no, Sir Peter, my dear, 'tis always you that begins.

Sir Pet. No, no—no such thing.

L. Teaz. Have a care, this is not the way to live happy, if you fly out thus.

Sir Pet. No, no——'tis you.

L. Teaz. No——'tis you.

Sir Pet. Zounds! I say 'tis you.

L. Teaz. Lord! I never saw such a man in my life, just what my cousin Sophy told me.

Sir Pet. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, saucy, impertinent minx.

L. Teaz. You are a very great bear, I am sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir Pet. But I am very well served for marrying you, a pert, forward, rural coquette, who had refused half the honest 'quires in the country.

L. Teaz. I am sure I was a great fool for marrying you—a stiff, crop, dangling old bachelor, who was unmarried at fifty, because nobody would have you.

Sir Pet. You was very glad to have me—you never had such an offer before.

L. Teaz. Oh, yes I had—there was Sir Tivy Terrier, who every body said would be a better match; for his estate was full as good as yours, and—he has broke his neck since.

Sir Pet. Very—very well, madam—you're an ungrateful woman; and may plagues light on me, if I ever try to be friends with you again—You shall have a separate maintenance.

L. Teaz. By all means a separate maintenance.

Sir Pet. Very well, madam—Oh, very well. Aye, madam, and I believe the stories of you and Charles—of you and Charles, madam,—were not without foundation.

L. Teaz. Take care, Sir Peter; take care what you say, for I won't be suspected without a cause, I promise you.

Sir Pet. A divorce.——

L. Teaz. Aye, a divorce.

Sir Pet.

Sir Pet. Aye, zounds ! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors.

L. Teaz. Well, Sir Peter, I see you are going to be in a passion, so I'll leave you, and when you come properly to your temper, we shall be the happiest couple in the world ; and never—never—quarrel more. Ha, ha, ha. [Exit.]

Sir Pet. What the devil ! can't I make her angry neither—I'll after her—Zounds—she must not presume to keep her temper.——No, no—she may break my heart—but damn it—I'm determined she shan't keep her temper. (Exit.)

SCENE, CHARLES'S HOUSE.

Enter TRIP, Sir OLIVER and MOSES.

Trip. This way, gentlemen, this way—Moses, what's the gentleman's name ?

Sir Oliv. Mr Moses, what's my name ? (Aside.)

Mos. Mr Premium——

Trip. Oh, Mr Premium,—very well. (Exit.)

Sir Oliv. To judge by the servant, one would not imagine the master was ruined—Sure this was my brother's house.

Mos. Yes, sir,—Mr Charles bought it of Mr Joseph, with furniture, pictures, &c. just as the old gentleman left it.—Sir Peter thought it a great piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliv. In my mind the other's œconomy in selling it to him, was more reprehensible by half.

Enter TRIP.

Trip. Gentlemen, my master is very sorry he has company at present, and cannot see you.

Sir Oliv. If he knew who it was that wanted to see him, perhaps he would not have sent such a message.

Trip. Oh ! Yes, I told who it was—I did not forget my little Premium, no, no.

Sir Oliv. Very well, sir ; and pray what may your name be ?

D

Trip.

Trip. Trip, sir; Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliv. Very well, Mr Trip——You have a pleasant sort of a place here, I guess.

Trip. Pretty well——There are four of us, who pass our time agreeably enough—Our wages, indeed, are but small, and sometimes a little in arrear—We have but fifty guineas a-year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

Sir Oliv. Bags and bouquets!—Halters and bastina-does!

Trip. Oh Moses, hark'ye, did you get that little bill discounted for me?

Sir Oliv. Wants to raise money too!—Mercy on me!—He has distresses, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns.

Mos. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr Trip.

(*Gives the note.*)

Trip. No! Why I thought when my friend Brush had set his mark upon it, it was as good as cash.

Mos. No, indeed, it would not do.

Trip. Perhaps you could get it done by way of annuity.

Sir Oliv. An annuity!—A footman raise money by annuity!—Well said luxury, egad.

(*Aside.*)

Mos. Well, but you must insure your place.

Trip. Oh! I'll insure my life, if you please.

Sir Oliv. That's more than I would your neck.

(*Aside.*)

Trip. Well, but I should like to have it done before this damn'd register takes place; one would not wish to have one's name made public.

Mos. No certainly—But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why, there's none of my master's cloaths will fall very soon, I believe; but I can give a mortgage on some of his winter suits, with equity of redemption before Christmas—or a *post obit* on his blue and silver. Now these, with a few pair of point ruffles, by way of security, (*bell rings*) coming, coming. Gentlemen, if you'll walk this way, perhaps I may introduce you now.

—Moses,

—Moses, don't forget the annuity—I'll insure my place; my little fellow.

Sir Oliv. If the man is the shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

CHARLES, CARELESS, *Sir TOBY*, and *Gentlemen*, discovered drinking.

Char. Ha, ha, ha.———'Fore heaven you are in the right—the degeneracy of the age is astonishing; there are many of our acquaintance who are men of wit, genius and spirit, but then they won't drink.

Care. True, Charles; they sink into the more substantial luxuries of the table, and quite neglect the bottle.

Char. Right—besides, society suffers by it; for instead of the mirth and humour that used to mantle over a bottle of Burgundy, the conversation is as insipid as the Spa water they drink, which has all the tartness of Champagne, without its spirit or flavour.

Sir Toby. But what will you say to those who prefer play to the bottle?—There's Harry, Dick and Careless himself, who are under a hazard regimen.

Char. Psha! no such thing—What! would you train a horse for the course by keeping from corn? Let me throw upon a bottle of Burgundy, and I never lose; at least I never feel my loss, and that's the same thing.

1st. Gent. True; besides, 'tis wine determines if a man be really in love.

Char. So it is—Fill up a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats at the top is the girl that has bewitched you.

Care. But come, Charles, you have not given us your real favourite.

Char. Faith I have withheld her only in compassion to you, for if I give her, you must toast a round of her peers, which is impossible (*Sighs*) on earth.

Care. We'll toast some heathen deity, or celestial goddess, to match her.

Char. Why then bumpers—bumpers all round—
Here's Maria—Maria—(*Sighs.*)

1st. Gent. Maria—'plha, give us her surname.

Char. 'Plha—Hang her surname, that's too formal to be registered in love's kalendar.

1st. Gent. Maria then—Here's Maria.

Sir Toby. Maria—Come, here's Maria.

Char. Come, Sir Toby, have a care; you must give a beauty superlative.

Sir Toby. Then I'll give you—Here's—

Care. Nay, never hesitate.—But Sir Toby has got a song that will excuse him.

Omnes. The song—the song.

SONG.

Here's to the maiden of blushing fifteen,

Now to the widow of fifty;

Here's to the flaunting, extravagant quean,

And then to the housewife that's thrifty.

Let the toast pass, drink to the last,

I warrant she'll find an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize,

Now to the damsel with none, Sir;

Here's to the maid with a pair of blue eyes,

And now to the nymph with but one, Sir.

Let the toast pass, &c.

Here's to the maid with her bosom of snow,

Now to her that's as brown as a berry;

Here's to the wife with her face full of woe,

And now to the damsel that's merry.

Let the toast pass, &c.

For let them be clumsy, or let them be slim,

Young or ancient, I care not a feather;

So fill us a bumper quite up to the brim,

And e'en let us toast them together.

Let the toast pass, &c.

T&P

TRIP enters and whispers CHARLES.

Char. Gentlemen, I must beg your pardon; [*rising*] I must leave you upon business—Careless, take the chair.

Care. What, this is some wench, but we won't molest you for her.

Char. No, upon my honour—It is only a Jew and a broker come by appointment.

Care. A Jew and a broker! we'll have 'em in.

Char. Then desire Mr Moses to walk in.

Trip. And little Premium too, Sir.

Care. Aye, Moses and Premium. (*Exit Trip*) Charles, we'll give the rascals some generous Burgundy.

Char. No, hang it—wine but draws forth the natural qualities of a man's heart, and to make them drink, would only be to whet their knavery.

Enter SIR OLIVER and MOSES.

Walk in, gentlemen, walk in; Trip, give chairs; sit down, Mr Premium, sit down, Moses. Glasses, Trip; come, Moses, I'll give you a sentiment. "*Here's success to usury.*" Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

Mos. "*Here's success to usury.*"

Care. True, Charles, usury is industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir Oliv. Then here's "*All the success it deserves.*"

Care. Oh, dam'me, Sir, that won't do; you demur to the toast, and shall drink it in a pint bumper at least.

Mos. Oh, pray, Sir, consider Mr Premium is a gentleman.

Care. And therefore loves good wine, and I'll see justice done to the bottle.—Fill, Moses, a quart.

Char. Pray, consider, gentlemen, Mr Premium is a stranger.

Sir Oliv. I wish I was out of their company. [*Aside.*]

Care. Come along my boys; if they won't drink with us, we'll not stay with them; the dice are in the next room—You'll settle your business, Charles, and come to us.

Char. Aye, aye—But, Careless, you must be ready—perhaps I may have occasion for you.

Care. Aye, aye, bill, bond, or annuity, 'tis all the same to me,

[*Exit with the rest.*]

Mos.

Mos. Mr Premium is a gentleman of the strictest honour and secrecy, and always performs what he undertakes—Mr Premium, this is—*(formally.)*

Char. 'Piha! hold your tongue—My friend, Moses, Sir, is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression—I shall cut the matter very short;—I'm an extravagant young fellow that wants to borrow money; and you, as I take it, are a prudent old fellow who has got money to lend—I am such a fool as to give fifty per cent. rather than go without it; and you, I suppose, are rogue enough to take an hundred if you can get it. And now we understand one another, and may proceed to business without further ceremony:

Sir Oliv. Exceeding frank, upon my word—I see you are not a man of compliments.

Char. No, Sir.

Sir Oliv. Sir, I like you the better for it—However, you are mistaken in one thing; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure you some from a friend; but then he's a damn'd unconscionable dog; is he not, Moses?

Mos. But you can't help that.

Sir Oliv. And then, he has not the money by him, but must sell stock at a great loss. Must he not Moses?

Mos. Yes, indeed—You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lye.

Char. Aye, those who speak truth usually do—And Sir, I must pay the difference, I suppose—Why look'ye, Mr Premium, I know that money is not to be had without paying for it.

Sir Oliv. Well—but what security could you give?—You have not any land I suppose?

Char. Not a mole-hill, not a twig, but what grows in, bow-pots out at the windows.

Sir Oliv. Nor any stock, I presume.

Char. None but live stock, and they're only a few pointers and ponies.—But pray, Sir, are you acquainted with any of my connections?

Sir Oliv. To say the truth, I am,

Char.

Char.

declin

Char. Then you must have heard that I have a rich old uncle, in India, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations.

Sir Oliv. That you have a wealthy Uncle I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

Char. Oh yes, I'm told I am a monstrous favourite; and that he intends leaving me every thing.

Sir Oliv. Indeed! this is the first time I heard of it.

Char. Yes, yes, he intends making me his heir—
Does he not, Moses?

Mos. Oh yes, I'll take my oath of that.

Sir Oliv. Egad, they'll persuade me presently that I'm at Bengal. (*Aside.*)

Char. Now, what I propose, Mr Premium, is to give you a *post obit* on my uncle's life. Though, indeed, my uncle Noll has been very kind to me, and upon my soul, I shall be sincerely sorry to hear any thing has happened him.

Sir Oliv. Not more than I should I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be the worst security you could offer me, for I might live to an hundred, and never recover the principal.

Char. Oh, yes, you would, for the moment he dies, you come upon me for the money.

Sir Oliv. Then I believe I would be the most unwelcome dun-you ever had in your life.

Char. What, you are afraid, my little Premium, that my uncle is too good a life.

Sir Oliv. No, indeed, I am not; tho' I have heard he's as heal, and as hearty, as any man of his years in Christendom.

Char. Oh, there you are misinformed. No—no, poor uncle Oliver! he breaks apace. The climate, sir, has hurt his constitution, and I'm told he's so much altered of late, that his nearest relations don't know him.

Sir Oliv. No! ha, ha, ha; so much altered of late, that his nearest relations would not know him. Ha, ha, ha, that's droll egad.

Char. What, you are pleased to hear he is on the decline, my little Premium.

Sir Oliv.

Sir Oliv. No, I am not,—no, no, no.

Char. Yes you are, for it mends your chance.

Sir Oliv. But I am told Sir Oliver is coming over—Nay, some say he is actually arrived.

Char. Oh, there you are misinformed again—No—no such thing—he is this moment at Bengal. What! I must certainly know better than you.

Sir Oliv. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I; though I have it from very good authority—Have I not Moses?

Mos. Most undoubtedly.

Sir Oliv. But, Sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing that you would dispose of.

Char. How do you mean?

Sir Oliv. For instance, now; I have heard your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate.

Char. Yes, but that's gone long ago—Moses can inform you how, better than I can.

Sir Oliv. Good luck! all the family race cups, and corporation bowls gone! (*Aside*) It was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and compleat.

Char. Much too large and valuable for a private gentleman: for my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, and thought it a pity to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir Oliv. Mercy on me! knowledge that has run in the family like an heir-loom. (*Aside*) And pray, how may they have been disposed of?

Char. Oh! You must ask the auctioneer that—I don't believe even Moses can direct you there.

Mos. No—I never meddle with books.

Sir Oliv. The profligate! (*Aside*) And is there nothing you can dispose of?

Char. Nothing——unless you have a taste for old family pictures. I have a whole room full of ancestors above stairs.

Sir Oliv. Why sure you would not sell your relations?

Char.

Char. Every soul of them to the best bidder.

Sir Oliv. Not your great uncles and aunts.

Char. Aye, and my grandfathers and grandmothers.

Sir Oliv. I'll never forgive him this. (*Aside.*) Why! — what! — Do you take me for Shylock in the play, to raise money from me on your own flesh and blood!

Char. Nay, don't be in a passion, my little Premium; what is it to you, if you have your money's worth?

Sir Oliv. That's very true as you say — Well, well, I believe I can dispose of the family canvas. I'll never forgive him this. (*Aside.*)

Enter CARELESS.

Care. Come, Charles, what the devil are you doing so long with the broker? — we are waiting for you.

Char. Oh! Careless, you are just come in time, we are to have a sale above stairs — I am going to sell all my ancestors to little Premium.

Care. Burn your ancestors!

Char. No, no, he may do that afterwards if he will. But, Careless, you shall be auctioneer.

Care. With all my heart — I can handle a hammer as well as a dice box — a-going — a-going.

Char. Bravo! — And Moses, you shall be appraiser, if we want one.

Mos. Yes, I'll be the appraiser.

Sir Oliv. Oh the profligate! (*Aside.*)

Char. But what's the matter, my little Premium? You don't seem to relish this business.

Sir Oliv. (*Affecting to laugh*) Oh yes, I do, vastly; ha, ha, ha, I — Oh the prodigal! (*Aside.*)

Char. Very true; for when a man wants money, who the devil can he make free with if he can't with his own relations. (*Exit.*)

Sir Oliv. (*Following*) I'll never forgive him.

ACT IV.

ACT IV.

Enter CHARLES, SIR OLIVER, CARELESS, and
MOSES.

CHARLES.

WALK in, gentlemen, walk in; here they are—the family of the Surfaces up to the conquest.

Sir Oliv. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Char. Aye, there they are, done in the true spirit and stile of portrait painting, and not like your modern Raphaels, who will make your picture independent of yourself;—no, the great merit of these are, the inveterate likeness they bear to the originals. All stiff and awkward as they were, and like nothing in human nature besides.

Sir Oliv. Oh, we shall never see such figures of men again.

Char. I hope not—You see, Mr Premium, what a domestic man I am; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my ancestors—But come, let us proceed to business—To your pulpit, Mr Auctioneer—Oh, here's a great chair of my father's, that seems fit for nothing else.

Care. The very thing—but what shall I do for a hammer, Charles? An auctioneer is nothing without a hammer.

Char. A hammer! [*looking round*] Let's see, what have we here—Sir Richard, heir to Robert—a genealogy in full, egad—Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany; here's the family tree, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliv. What an unnatural rogue he is!—An expert de facto parricide, [*Aside.*]

Care. 'Gad, Charles, this is lucky; it will not only serve for a hammer, but a catalogue too if we should want it.

Char.

Char. True—Come, here's my great uncle Sir Richard Ravelin, a marvellous good general in his day—He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet—He is not dressed out in feathers like our modern captains, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be.—What say you, Mr Premium?

Mos. Mr Premium would have you speak.

Char. Why, you shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's cheap enough for a staff officer.

Sir Oliv. Heaven deliver me! his great uncle Sir Richard going for ten pounds—[*Aside*]*—*Well, Sir, I take him at that price.

Char. Careless, knock down my uncle Sir Richard.

Care. Going, going—a-going—gone.

Char. This is a maiden sister of his, my great aunt Deborah, done by Kneller, thought to be one of his best pictures, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she sits, as a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten. I'm sure the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliv. Ah, poor aunt Deborah! a woman that set such a value on herself, going for five pounds ten. [*Aside*]*—*Well, Sir, she's mine.

Char. Knock down my aunt Deborah, Careless.

Care. Gone.

Char. Here are two cousins of theirs—Moses, these pictures were done when beaux wore periwigs, and ladies their own hair.

Sir Oliv. Yes, truly—head dresses seem to have been somewhat lower in those days.

Char. Here's a grandfather of my mother's, a judge well known on the western circuit. What will you give for him?

Mos. Four guineas.

Char. Four guineas! why you don't bid the price of his wig. Premium, you have more respect for the wool sack; do let me knock him down at fifteen.

Sir Oliv. By all means.

Care.

Care. Gone.

Char. Here are two brothers, William and Walter Blunt, Esqrs, both members of parliament, and great speakers; and what's very extraordinary, I believe this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

Sir Oliv. That's very extraordinary indeed!—I'll take them at your own price, for the honour of parliament.

Char. Well said, Premium.

Care. I'll knock them down at forty pounds.—Going—going—gone.

Char. Here's a jolly, portly fellow; I don't know what relation he is to the family; but he was formerly mayor of Norwich, let's knock him down at eight pounds.

Sir Oliv. No, I think six is enough for a mayor.

Char. Come, come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen into the bargain.

Sir Oliv. They are mine.

Char. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen.

Care. Gone.

Char. But hang it, we shall be all day at this rate; come, come, give me three hundred pounds, and take all on this side the room in a lump—That will be the best way.

Sir Oliv. Well well, any thing to accommodate you; they are mine—But there's one portrait you have always passed over.

Care. What, that little ill-looking fellow over the settee.

Sir Oliv. Yes, Sir, 'tis that I mean—but I don't think him so ill-looking a fellow by any means.

Char. That's the picture of my uncle Sir Oliver—Before he went abroad it was done, and is esteemed a very great likeness.

Care. That your uncle Oliver! Then in my opinion you never will be friends, for he is one of the most stern looking rogues I ever beheld; he has an unforgiving eye, and a damn'd disinheriting countenance. Don't you think so, little Premium?

Sir Oliv.

Sir Oliv. Upon my soul I do not, Sir; I think it as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. — But, I suppose, your uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber:

Char. No, hang it, the old gentleman has been very good to me, and I'll keep his picture as long as I have a room to put it in.

Sir Oliv. The rogue's my nephew after all—I forgive him every thing. [*Aside.*] But Sir, I have some how taken a fancy to that picture.

Char. I am sorry for it, master Broker, for you certainly won't have it. — What the devil! have you not got enough of the family?

Sir Oliv. I forgive him every thing. [*Aside.*] Look'ye, Sir, I am a strange sort of a fellow, and when I take a whim in my head, I don't value money; I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Char. Pr'ythee don't be troublesome — I tell you I won't part with it, and there's an end on't.

Sir Oliv. How like his father the dog is! — I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw so strong a resemblance. [*Aside.*] Well, Sir, here's a draft for your sum. [*Giving a bill.*]

Char. Why this bill is for eight hundred pounds.

Sir Oliv. You'll not let Sir Oliver go, then.

Char. No, I tell you once for all.

Sir Oliv. Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that some other time — But give me your hand; [*presses it*] you are a damn'd honest fellow, Charles — O lord! I beg pardon, Sir, for being so free — Come along, Moses.

Char. But hark'ye, Premium, you'll provide good lodgings for these gentlemen. [*Going.*]

Sir Oliv. I'll send for 'em in a day or two.

Char. And pray let it be a genteel conveyance, for I assure you most of 'em have been used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oliv. I will for all but Oliver.

Char. For all but the honest little Nabob.

Sir Oliv. You are fixed on that.

Char. Peremptorily.

E

Sir Oliv.

Sir Oliv. Ah the dear extravagant dog! [*Aside*]
Good day, Sir. Come, Moses.—Now let me see who
dares call him profligate? [*Exit with Moses.*]

Care. Why, Charles, this is the very prince of
brokers.

Char. I wonder where Moses got acquainted with
so honest a fellow.—But, Careless, step into the com-
pany; I'll wait on you presently, I see old Rowley
coming.

Care. But hark'ye, Charles, don't let that fellow
make you part with any of that money to discharge
musty old debts. Tradesmen, you know, are the most
impertinent people in the world.

Char. True, and paying them would be encour-
aging them.

Care. Well, settle your business, and make what
haste you can. [*Exit.*]

Char. Eight hundred pounds! Two thirds of this
are mine by right—Five hundred and thirty odd
pounds!—Gad, I never knew till now, that my ances-
tors were such valuable acquaintance.—Kind ladies
and gentlemen, I am your very much obliged, and
most grateful humble servant. [*Bowing to the pictures.*]

Enter ROWLEY.

Ah! Rowley, you are just come in time to take leave
of your old acquaintance.

Rowl. Yes, Sir; I heard they were going.—But
how can you support such spirits under all your mis-
fortunes?

Char. That's the cause, Mr Rowley; my misfor-
tunes are so many, that I can't afford to part-with my
spirits.

Rowl. And can you really take leave of your an-
cestors with so much unconcern?

Char. Unconcern! what, I suppose you are surpris-
ed that I am not more sorrowful at losing the company
of so many worthy friends. It is very distressing to
be sure; but you see they never move a muscle, then
why the devil should I!

Rowl. Ah, dear Charles!

Char.

Char. But come, I have no time for trifling;—here, take this bill and get it changed, and carry an hundred pounds to poor Stanley, or we shall have somebody call that has a better right to it.

Rowl. Ah, Sir, I wish you would remember the proverb——

Char. *Be just before you are generous.*—Why, so I would if I could, but justice is an old lame, hobbling beldam, and I can't get her to keep pace with generosity for the soul of me.

Rowl. Do, dear Sir, reflect.

Char. That's very true, as you say—but Rowley, while I have, by heavens I'll give—so damn your morality, and away to old Stanley with the money. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter SIR OLIVER and MOSES.

Mos. Well, Sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr Charles in all his glory—'tis a great pity he's so extravagant.

Sir Oliv. True,—but he would not sell my picture.

Mos. And loves wine and women so much.

Sir Oliv. But he would not sell my picture.—

Mos. And games so deep.

Sir Oliv. But he would not sell my picture.—Oh, here comes Rowley.

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowl. Well, Sir, I find you have made a purchase.

Sir Oliv. Yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Rowl. And he has commissioned me to return you an hundred pounds of the purchase money, but under your fictitious character of old Stanley. I saw a taylor and two hosiers dancing attendance, who, I know, will go unpaid, and the hundred pounds would satisfy them.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, I'll pay his debts and his benevolence too.—But now, I'm no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Enter TRIP.

Trip. Gentlemen, I'm sorry I was not in the way to shew you out. Hark'ye Moses. [*Exit with Moses.*]

Sir Oliv. There's a fellow, now—Will you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master.

Rowl. Indeed!

Sir Oliv. And they are now planning an annuity business—Oh! master Rowley, in my time servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were wore a little threadbare; but now they have their vices, like their birth-day clothes, with the gloss on. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, the Apartments of JOSEPH SURFACE.

Enter JOSEPH and a SERVANT

Jos. No letters from Dady Teazle.

Serv. No, Sir.

Jos. I wonder she did not write if she could not come—I hope Sir Peter does not suspect—But Charles's dissipation and extravagance are great points in my favour. (*Knocking at the door*) See if it is her.

Serv. 'Tis Lady Teazle, Sir; but she always orders her chair to the milliner's in the next street.

Jos. Then draw that screen—my opposite neighbour is a maiden lady of so curious a temper—You need not wait. (*Exit Servant*)—My Lady Teazle, I'm afraid, begins to suspect my attachment to Maria; but she must not be acquainted with that secret till I have her more in my power.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

L. Teaz. What, Sentiment in Soliloquy!—Have you been very impatient now? Nay, you look so grave, —I assure you I came as soon as I could.

Jos. Oh, madam, punctuality is a species of constancy—a very unfashionable custom among ladies.

L. Teaz. Nay, you wrong me; I'm sure you'd pity me if you knew my situation—[*both sit.*]—Sir Peter really

really grows so peevish, and so ill-natured, there's no enduring him; and then to suspect me with Charles—

Jos. I'm glad my scandalous friends keep up that report.

L. Teaz. For my part, I wish Sir Peter to let Maria marry him—Woul'dn't you, Mr Surface?

Jos. Indeed I would not—[*Aside*].—Oh, to be sure; and then my dear Lady Teazle would be convinced how groundless her suspicions were, of my having any thoughts of the silly girl.

L. Teaz. Then, there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has propagated malicious stories about me—and what's very provoking, all without the least foundation.

Jos. Ah! there's the mischief—for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there's no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

L. Teaz. And to be continually censured and suspected, when I know the integrity of my own heart—it would almost prompt me to give him some grounds for it.

Jos. Certainly—for when a husband grows suspicious, and withdraws his confidence from his wife, it then becomes a part of her duty to endeavour to outwit him.—You owe it to the natural privilege of your sex.

L. Teaz. Indeed!

Jos. Oh yes; for your husband should never be deceived in you, and you ought to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

L. Teaz. This is the newest doctrine.

Jos. Very wholesome, believe me.

L. Teaz. So, the only way to prevent his suspicions, is to give him cause for them.

L. Teaz. But then the consciousness of my innocence—

Jos. Ah, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis that consciousness of your innocence that ruins you. What is it that makes you imprudent in your conduct, and careless of the censures of the world? The consciousness of your innocence.—What is it that makes you regardless of forms, and inattentive to your husband's peace?

—Why, the consciousness of your innocence.—Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you could only be prevailed upon to make a trifling *faux-pas*, you can't imagine how circumspect you would grow.

L. Teaz. Do you think so?

Jos. Depend upon it.—Your case at present, my dear Lady Teazle, resembles that of a person in a plethora—you are absolutely dying of too much health.

L. Teaz. Why, indeed, if my understanding could be convinced——

Jos. Your understanding!—Oh yes, your understanding *should* be convinced. Heaven forbid that. I should persuade you to any thing that you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honour for that.

L. Teaz. Don't you think you may as well leave honour out of the question? [*both rise.*]

Jos. Ah! I see, Lady Teazle, the effects of your country education still remain.

L. Teaz. They do, indeed, and I begin to find myself imprudent; and if I should be brought to act wrong, it would be sooner from Sir Peter's ill treatment of me, than from your honourable logic, I assure you.

Jos. Then, by this hand, which is unworthy of—
[*Kneeling, a servant enters.*—]—What do you want, you scoundrel?

Serv. I beg pardon, Sir,—I thought you would not chuse Sir Peter should come up.

Jos. Sir Peter!

L. Teaz. Sir Peter! Oh, I'm undone!—What shall I do? Hide me somewhere, good Mr Logic.

Jos. Here, here, behind this screen, (*She runs behind the screen*) and now reach me a book. [*Sits down and reads.*]

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir Pet. Aye, there he is, ever improving himself.—Mr Surface, Mr Surface.

Jos. [*Affecting to gape.*] Oh, Sir Peter! I rejoice to see you—I was got over a sleepy book here—I am vastly glad to see you—I thank you for this call—I believe

believe you have not been here since I finished my library.—Books, books, you know, are the only thing I am a coxcomb in.

Sir Pet. Very pretty, indeed—why, even your screen is a source of knowledge—hung round with maps I see.

Jos. Yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, so you must when you want to find any thing in a hurry.

Jos. Yes, or to hide any thing in a hurry. [*Aside.*]

Sir Pet. But, my dear friend, I want to have some private talk with you.

Jos. You need not wait.

[*Exit Serv.*]

Sir Pet. Pray sit down—(*both sit*)—My dear friend, I want to impart to you some of my distresses—In short, Lady Teazle's behaviour of late has given me very great uneasiness. She not only dissipates and destroys my fortune, but I have strong reasons to believe she has formed an attachment elsewhere.

Jos. I am unhappy to hear it.

Sir Pet. I knew you would sympathize with me.

Jos. Believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would affect me—just as much as it does you.

Sir Pet. What a happiness to have a friend we can trust, even with our family secrets!—Can't you guess who it is?

Jos. I hav'n't the most distant idea.—It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite.

Sir Pet. No, no—What do you think of Charles?

Jos. My brother! impossible! I can't think he would be capable of such baseness and ingratitude.

Sir Pet. Ah, the goodness of your own mind makes you slow to believe such villainy.

Jos. Very true, Sir Peter.—The man who is conscious of the integrity of his own heart, is ever slow to credit another's baseness.

Sir Pet. And yet, that the son of my old friend should practise against the honour of my family.

Jos. Aye, there's the case, Sir Peter.—When ingratitude beards the dart of injury, the wound feels doubly smart.

Sir Pet.

Sir Pet. What noble sentiments!—He never used a sentiment, ungrateful boy! that I have acted as guardian to, and who was brought up under my eye; and I never in my life refused him—my advice.

Jos. I don't know, Sir Peter—he may be such a man—if it be so, he is no longer a brother of mine; I renounce him.—For the man who can break through the laws of hospitality, and seduce the wife or daughter of his friend, deserves to be branded as a pest to society.

Sir Pet. And yet, Joseph, if I was to make it public, I should only be sneered and laughed at.

Jos. Why, that is very true—No, no, you must not make it public; people would talk——

Sir Pet. Talk!—they'd say it was all my own fault; an old doating bachelor to marry a young giddy girl. They'd paragraph me in the news-papers, and make ballads on me.

Jos. And yet, Sir Peter, I can't think that my Lady Teazle's honour——

Sir Pet. Ah, my dear friend, what's her honour opposed against the flattery of a handsome young fellow?—But Joseph, she has been upbraiding me of late, that I have not made her a settlement; and I think, in our last quarrel, she told she would not be sorry if I was dead. Now, I have brought draughts of two deeds for your perusal, and she shall find, if I was to die, that I have not been inattentive to her welfare while living. By the one she will enjoy eight hundred pounds a-year during my life; and by the other, the bulk of my fortune after my death.

Jos. This conduct is truly generous.—I wish it may not corrupt my pupil. (*Aside.*)

Sir Pet. But I would not have her as yet acquainted with the least mark of my affection.

Jos. Not I—if I could help it. (*Aside.*)

Sir Pet. And now I have unburthened myself to you, let us talk over your affair with Maria.

Jos. Not a syllable upon the subject now. (*Alarmed.*)——Some other time; I am too much affected

by

by your affairs, to think of my own. For the man who can think of his own happiness, while his friend is in distress, deserves to be hunted as a monster out of society.

Sir Pet. I am sure of your affection for her.

Jos. Let me intreat you, Sir Peter—

Sir Pet. And though you are so averse to Lady Teazle's knowing it, I assure you she is not your enemy, and I am sensibly chagrined you have made no further progress.

Jos. Sir Peter, I must not hear you—The man who—*(Enter a Servant)* What do you want, sirrah?

Serv. Your brother, Sir, is at the door talking to a gentleman; he says he knows you are at home, that Sir Peter is with you, and he must see you.

Jos. I am not at home.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, you shall be at home.

Jos. *(After some hesitation)* Very well, let him come up.

Sir Pet. Now, Joseph, I'll hide myself, and do you tax him about the affair with my Lady Teazle, and so draw the secret from him.

Jos. O fye, Sir Peter—what, join in a plot to trepan my brother!

Sir Pet. Oh aye, to serve your friend;—besides, if he is innocent, as you say he is, it will give him an opportunity to clear himself, and make me very happy. Hark, I hear him coming—where shall I go?—behind this screen—What the devil! here has been one listener already, for I'll swear I saw a petticoat.

Jos. *[Assuming to laugh]* It's very ridiculous—Ha, ha, ha,—a ridiculous affair, indeed—ha, ha, ha—Hark' ye, Sir Peter, *[pulling him aside]* though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet you know it does not follow, that one is to be an absolute Joseph either. Hark'ye, 'tis a little French milliner, that calls upon me sometimes, and hearing you were coming, and having some character to lose, she slipped behind the screen.

Sir Pet.

Sir Pet. A French milliner! (*smiling*) cunning rogue! Joseph—Sly rogue!—But zounds, she has overheard every thing that has passed about my wife.

Jos. Oh, never fear.—Take my word it will never go farther for her.

Sir Pet. Won't it?

Jos. No, depend upon it.

Sir Pet. Well, well, if it will go no further—But—where shall I hide myself?

Jos. Here, here, slip into the closet, and you may overhear every word.

L. Teaz. Can I steel away? [*Peeping.*]

Jos. Hush! hush! don't stir.

Sir Pet. Joseph, tax him home. (*Peeping.*)

Jos. In, in, my dear Sir Peter.

L. Teaz. Can't you lock the closet door?

Jos. Not a word—you'll be discovered.

Sir Pet. Joseph, don't spare him.

Jos. For heaven's sake lie close—A pretty situation I am in, to part man and wife in this manner. [*Aside.*]

Sir Pet. You're sure the little French milliner won't blab.

Enter CHARLES.

Char. Why, how now, brother, your fellow denied you, they said you were not at home.—What, have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Jos. Neither, brother, neither.

Char. But where's Sir Peter? I thought he was with you.

Jos. He was, brother; but hearing you was coming, he left the house.

Char. What, was the old fellow afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

Jos. Borrow! no, brother; but I am sorry to hear you have given that worthy man cause for great uneasiness.

Char. Yes, I am told I do that to a great many worthy men—But how do you mean, brother?

Jos.

Jos. Why, he thinks you have endeavoured to alienate the affections of Lady Teazle.

Char. Who, I alienate the affections of Lady Teazle! — Upon my word he accuses me very unjustly. What, has the old gentleman found out that he has got a young wife; or, what is worse, has the Lady found out that she has got an old husband?

Jos. For shame, brother.

Char. 'Tis true, I did once suspect her ladyship had a partiality for me, but upon my soul I never gave her the least encouragement; for, you know my attachment was to Maria.

Jos. This will make Sir Peter extremely happy— But if she had a partiality for you, sure you would not have been base enough——

Char. Why, look'ye, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonourable action; but if a pretty woman should purposely throw herself in my way, and that pretty woman should happen to be married to a man old enough to be her father——

Jos. What then?

Char. Why then, I believe I should——have occasion to borrow a little of your morality, brother.

Jos. Oh fie, brother—The man who can jest—

Char. Oh, that's very true, as you were going to observe.—— But Joseph, do you know that I am surprised at your suspecting me with Lady Teazle. I thought you was always the favourite there.

Jos. Me!

Char. Why yes, I have seen you exchange such significant glances.

Jos. 'Psha!

Char. Yes I have; and don't you remember when I came in here, and caught her and you at——

Jos. I must stop him. (*Aside*) [*Stops his mouth.*] Sir Peter has overheard every word that you have said.

Char. Sir Peter! where is he?—what, in the closet? —'Foregad I'll have him out.

Jos. No, no. [*Stopping him.*]

Char. I will—Sir Peter Teazle, come into court.

Enter

Enter SIR PETER.

What, my old guardian turn inquisitor, and take evidence incog.

Sir Pet. Give me your hand—I own, my dear boy, I have suspected you wrongfully; but you must not be angry with Joseph; it was my plot, and I shall think of you as long as I live for what I overheard.

Char. Then 'tis well you did not hear more. Is it not, Joseph?

Sir Pet. What, you would have retorted on Joseph, would you?

Char. And yet you might have as well suspected him as me. Might he not Joseph?

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. [*Whispering Joseph.*] Lady Sneerwell, Sir, is just coming up, and says she must see you.

Jos. Gentlemen, I must beg your pardon; I have company waiting for me; give me leave to conduct you down stairs.

Char. No, no, speak to them in another room; I have not seen Sir Peter a great while, and I want to talk with him.

Jos. Well, I'll send away the person and return immediately. Sir Peter, not a word of the little French milliner. (*Aside and exit.*)

Sir Pet. Ah, Charles, what a pity you don't associate more with your brother; we then might have some hopes of your reformation; he's a young man of such sentiments—Ah there is nothing in this world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Char. Oh, he's too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his good name, that I dare say he would as soon let a priest into his house as a wench.

Sir Pet. No, no, you accuse him wrongfully—Though Joseph is no rake, he is no saint.

Char. Oh! a perfect anchorite—a young hermit.

Sir Pet. Hush, hush; don't abuse him, for he may chance to hear of it again.

Char. Why, you won't tell him, will you?

Sir Pet.

Sir Pet. No, no, but—I have a great mind to tell him. (*Aside*) (*seems to hesitate*)—Hark'ye, Charles, have you a mind for a laugh at Joseph?

Char. I should like it of all things—let's have it.

Sir Pet. Gad, I'll tell him—I'll be even with Joseph for discovering me in the closet—(*Aside*)—Hark'ye, Charles, he had a girl with him when I called.

Char. Who, Joseph? impossible!

Sir Pet. Yes, a little French milliner, (*takes him to the front*)—and the best of the joke is, she is now in the room.

Char. The devil she is!—Where?

Sir Pet. Hush, hush—behind the screen.

Char. I'll have her out.

Sir Pet. No, no, no.

Char. Yes.

Sir Pet. No.

Char. By the Lord I will—So now for it.

Both run up to the screen—The screen falls, at the same time JOSEPH enters.

Char. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

Sir Pet. Lady Teazle, by all that's horrible!

Char. Sir Peter, this is the smartest little French milliner I ever saw—But pray what is the meaning of all this? You seem to have been playing at hide and seek here, and for my part, I don't know who's in or who's out of the secret—Madam, will you please to explain?—Not a word—!—Brother, is it your pleasure to illustrate?—Morality dumb too!—Well, though I can make nothing of it, I suppose you perfectly understand one another, good folks, and so I'll leave you. Brother, I am sorry you have given that worthy man so much cause for uneasiness—Sir Peter, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.—Ha, ha, ha. (*Exit.*)

Jos. Sir Peter, notwithstanding appearances are against me—if—if you'll give me leave—I'll explain every thing to your satisfaction.

Sir Pet. If you please, Sir,

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Jos.

Jos. Lady Teazle knowing my—Lady Teazle—I say—knowing my pretensions—to your ward—Maria—and—Lady Teazle—I say—knowing the jealousy of my—of your temper—she called in here—in order that she—that I—might explain—what these pretensions were—And—hearing you were coming—and—as I said before—knowing the jealousy of your temper—she—my Lady Teazle—I say—went behind the screen—and—This is a full and clear account of the whole affair.

Sir Pet. A very clear account truly! and I dare say the lady will vouch for the truth of every word of it.

L. Teaz. [*Advancing*] For not one syllable, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. What the devil! don't you think it worth your while to agree in the lie?

L. Teaz. There's not a word of truth in what that gentleman has been saying.

Jos. Zounds, madam, you won't ruin me.

L. Teaz. Stand out of the way, Mr Hypocrite, I'll speak for myself.

Sir Pet. Aye, aye—let her alone—she'll make a better story of it than you did.

L. Teaz. I came here with no intention of listening to his addresses to Maria, and even ignorant of his pretensions; but seduced by his insidious arts, at least to listen to his addresses, if not to sacrifice his honour, as well as my own, to his unwarrantable desires.

Sir Pet. Now I believe the truth is coming indeed.

Jos. What, is the woman mad?

L. Teaz. No, Sir, she has recovered her senses. Sir Peter, I cannot expect you'll credit me; but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am certain you did not know I was within hearing, has penetrated so deep into my heart, that could I have escaped the mortification of this discovery, my future life should have convinced you of my sincere repentance. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he pretended an honourable passion for his ward, I now view him in

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so despicable a light, that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to his addresses. (*Exit.*)

Jos. Sir Peter—Notwithstanding all this—Heaven is my witness——

Sir Pet. That you are a villain, and so I'll leave you to your meditations.——

Jos. Nay, Sir Peter; you must not leave me—The man who shuts his ears against conviction——

Sir Pet. Oh damn your sentiments——damn your sentiments.—— (*Exit, Joseph following.*)

ACT V.

SCENE, JOSEPH SURFACE'S Apartments.

Enter JOSEPH and a SERVANT.

JOSEPH.

MR Stanley! why should you think I would see Mr Stanley! you know well enough he comes intreating for something.

Serv. They let him in before I knew of it; and old Rowley is with him.

Jos. 'Psha, you blockhead; I am so distracted with my own misfortunes, I am not in a humour to speak with any one—but shew the fellow up. (*Exit Servant.*) Sure fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before—My character ruined with Sir Peter—my hopes of Maria lost—I'm in a pretty humour to listen to poor relations truly.—I shan't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on old Stanley. Oh, here he comes; I'll retire, and endeavour to put a little charity in my face however. [*Exit.*]

Enter SIR OLIVER and ROWLEY.

Sir Oliv. What, does he avoid us? That was him, was it not?

Rowl. Yes, Sir; but his nerves are too weak to bear the sight of a poor relation: I should have come first to break the matter to him.

Sir Oliv. A plague of his nerves!—yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking.

Rowl. Yes—he has as much speculative benevolence as any man in the kingdom, though he is not so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir Oliv. Yet he has a string of sentiments, I suppose, at his finger ends.

Rowl. And his favourite one is, *That charity begins at home.*

Sir Oliv. And his, I presume, is of that domestick sort, which never stirs abroad at all.

Rowl. Well, Sir, I'll leave you to introduce yourself as old Stanley; I must be here again to announce you in your real character.

Sir Oliv. True—and you'll afterwards meet me at Sir Peter's.

Rowl. Without losing a moment. (*Exit ROWLEY.*)

Sir Oliv. Here he comes—I don't like the complaisance of his features.

Enter JOSEPH.

Jos. Sir, your most obedient; I beg pardon for keeping you a moment—Mr Stanley, I presume.

Sir Oliv. At your service, Sir.

Jos. Pray, be seated, Mr Stanley, I intreat you, Sir.

Sir Oliv. Dear Sir, there's no occasion. Too ceremonious by half. (*Aside.*)

Jos. Though I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, I am very glad to see you look so well.—I think, Mr Stanley, you was nearly related to my mother.

Sir Oliv. I was, Sir; so nearly, that my present poverty I fear may do discredit to her wealthy children; else I would not presume to trouble you now.

Jos. Ah, Sir, don't mention that—For the man who is in distress has ever a right to claim kindred with the wealthy; I am sure I wish I was of that number, or that it was in my power even to afford you a small relief.

Sir Oliv. If your uncle Sir Oliver was here, I should have a friend. *Jos.*

Jos. I wish he was, Sir, you should not want an advocate with him, believe me.

Sir Oliv. I should not need one, my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty had enabled you to be the agent of his charities.

Jos. Ah, Sir, you are mistaken; avarice, avarice, Mr Stanley, is the vice of age; to be sure it has been spread abroad that he has been very bountiful to me, but without the least foundation, though I never chose to contradict the report.

Sir Oliv. And has he never remitted you bullion, rupees, or pagodas?

Jos. Oh, dear Sir, no such thing. I have indeed received some trifling presents from him, such as shawls, avadavats, and Indian crackers; nothing more, Sir.

Sir Oliv. There's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds! (*Aside*) Shawls, avadavats, and Indian crackers!

Jos. Then there's my brother, Mr Stanley; one would scarce believe what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

Sir Oliv. Not I for one. (*Aside*.)

Jos. Oh, the sums I have lent him!—Well 'twas an amiable weakness—I must own I can't defend it, tho' it appears more blameable at present, as it prevents me from serving you, Mr Stanley, as my heart directs.

Sir Oliv. Dissembler—(*Aside*)—then you cannot assist me.

Jos. I am very unhappy to say it's not in my power at present; but you may depend upon hearing from me when I can be of any service to you.

Sir Oliv. Sweet Sir, you are too good.

Jos. Not at all, Sir; to pity without the power to relieve, is still more painful than to ask and to be denied. Indeed, Mr Stanley, you have deeply affected me. Sir, your most devoted; I wish you health and spirits.

Sir Oliv. Your ever grateful and perpetual (*bowing low*) humble servant.

Jos. I am extremely sorry, Sir, for your misfortunes—Here, open the door—Mr Stanley, your most devoted.

Sir Oliv. Your most obliged servant. Charles, you are my heir.

(Aside, and Exit.)

Jos. This is another of the evils that attends a man having so good a character—It subjects him to the importunity of the necessitous—the pure and sterling ore of charity is a very expensive article in the catalogue of a man's virtues; whereas, the sentimental French plate I use answers the purpose full as well, and pays no tax.

(Going.)

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowl. Mr Surface, your most obedient; I wait on you from your uncle who is just arrived. *(Gives him a note.)*

Jos. How! Sir Oliver arrived!—Here, Mr—call back Mr Stanley.

Rowl. It's too late, Sir, I met him going out of the house.

Jos. Was ever any thing so unfortunate! *(Aside.)*—I hope my uncle has enjoyed good health and spirits.

Rowl. Oh, very good, Sir; he bid me inform you he'll wait on you within this half hour.

Jos. Present him my kind love and duty, and assure him I'm quite impatient to see him. *(Bowing.)*

Rowl. I shall, Sir.

[Exit Rowley.]

Jos. Pray do, Sir, *(bows)*—This was the most cursed piece of ill luck.

[Exit Joseph.]

SCENE, Sir PETER TEAZLE'S House.

Enter MRS CANDOUR and MAID.

Maid. Indeed, madam, my lady will see no one at present.

Mrs Cand. Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs. Candour?

Maid. I did, madam, and she begs to be excused.

Mrs Cand. Go again, for I am sure she must be greatly distressed. *(Exit maid.)* How provoking to be kept waiting!—I am not mistress of half the circumstances:—I shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the parties names at full length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

Enter

Enter SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.

Mrs Cand. Oh, Sir Benjamin, I am glad you are come; have you heard of Lady Teazle's affair? Well, I never was so surpris'd—and I am so distressed for the parties.

Sir Benj. Nay, I can't say I pity Sir Peter, he was always so partial to Mr Surface.

Mrs Cand. Mr Surface! Why it was Charles.

Sir Benj. Oh, no, madam, Mr Surface was the gallant.

Mrs Cand. No, Charles was the lover; and Mr Surface, to do him justice, was the cause of the discovery: he brought Sir Peter; and——

Sir Benj. Oh, my dear madam, no such thing: for I had it from one——

Mrs Cand. Yes, and I had it from one, that had it from one that knew——

Sir Benj. And I had it from one——

Mrs Cand. No such thing—but here comes my Lady Sneerwell, and perhaps she may have heard the particulars.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL.

L. Sneer. Oh, dear Mrs Candour, here's a sad affair about our friend Lady Teazle.

Mrs Cand. Why, to be sure, poor thing, I am much concerned for her.

L. Sneer. I protest so am I—though I must confess she was always too lively for me.

Mrs Cand. But she had a great deal of good nature.

Sir Benj. And had a very ready wit.

Mrs Cand. But do you know all the particulars? To Lady Sneerwell.]

Sir Benj. Yet who could have suspected Mr Surface!

Mrs Cand. Charles you mean.

Sir Benj. No, Mr Surface.

Mrs Cand. Oh, 'twas Charles.

L. Sneer. Charles!

Mrs Cand. Yes, Charles.

Sir Benj. I'll not pretend to dispute with you, Mrs Candour; but be it as it may, I hope Sir Peter's wounds won't prove mortal.

Mrs Cand.

Mrs Cand. Sir Peter's wounds! what! did they fight? I never heard a word of that.

Sir Benj. No!—

Mrs Cand. No!—

L. Sneer. Nor I, a syllable: Do, dear Sir Benjamin, tell us.

Sir Benj. Oh, my dear madam, then you don't know half the affair—Why—why—I'll tell you—Sir Peter, you must know, had a long-time suspected Lady Teazle's visits to Mr Surface.

Mrs Cand. To Charles you mean.

Sir Benj. No, Mr Surface;—and upon going to his house, and finding Lady Teazle there, Sir, says Sir Peter, you are a very ungrateful fellow.

Mrs Cand. Aye, that was Charles.

Sir Benj. Mr Surface.—And old as I am, says he, I demand immediate satisfaction: Upon this, they both drew their swords, and to it they fell.

Mrs Cand. That must be Charles; for it is very unlikely that Mr Surface should fight him in his own house.

Sir Benj. 'Sdeath, madam, not at all. Lady Teazle, upon seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hystericks, and was followed by Charles, calling out for hartshorn and waters. They fought, and Sir Peter received a wound in his right side by the thrust of a small sword.

Enter CRABTREE.

Crab. Pistols! pistols! nephew.

Mrs Cand. Oh, Mr Crabtree, I am glad you are come; now we shall have the whole affair.

Sir Benj. No, no, it was a small sword, uncle.

Crab. Zounds, nephew, I say it was a pistol.

Sir Benj. A thrust in second, through the small guts.

Crab. A bullet lodged in the thorax.

Sir Benj. But give me leave, dear uncle, it was a small sword.

Crab. I tell you it was a pistol—Won't you suffer any body to know any thing but yourself?—It was a pistol, and Charles.—

Mrs Cand. Aye! I knew it was Charles.

Sir Benj. Mr Surface, uncle.

Crab.

Crab. Why, zounds ! I say it was Charles ; must nobody speak but yourself ? I'll tell you how the whole affair was.

L. Sneer. }
Mrs Cand. } Aye do, do pray tell us.

Sir Benj. I see my uncle knows nothing at all about the matter.

Crab. Mr Surface, you must know, ladies, came late from Salt-hill, where he had been the evening before with a particular friend of his, who has a son at Eton ; his pistols were left on the bureau, and unfortunately loaded, and on Sir Peter's taxing Charles——

Sir Benj. Mr Surface you mean.

Crab. Do pray, nephew, hold your tongue, and let me speak sometimes—I say, Ladies, upon his taking Charles to account, and taxing him with the basest ingratitude——

Sir Benj. Aye, Ladies, I told you Sir Peter taxed him with ingratitude.

Crab. They agreed each to take a pistol—They fired at the same instant—Charles's ball took place, and lodged in the thorax. Sir Peter's missed, and what is very extraordinary, the ball grazed against a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the chimney, flew off through the window, at right angles, and wounded the postman, who was just come to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

Sir Benj. I heard nothing of all this ! I must own, ladies, my uncle's account is more circumstantial, though I believe mine is the true one.

L. Sneer. I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information.

[*Aside and exit.*]

Sir Benj. Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crab. Why, yes ; they do say—but that's neither here nor there.

Mrs Cand. But pray where is Sir Peter now ? I hope his wound won't prove mortal.

Crab. He was carried home immediately, and has given positive orders to be denied to every body.

Sir Benj.

Crab.

Sir Benj. And I believe Lady Teazle is attending him.

Mrs Cand. I believe so too.

Crab. Certainly—I met one of the faculty as I came in.

Sir Benj. Gad so! and here he comes.

Crab. Yes, yes, that's the doctor.

Mrs Cand. That certainly must be the physician.—
Now we shall get information.

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE.

Dear doctor, how is your patient?

Sir Benj. I hope his wounds are not mortal.

Crab. Is he in a fair way of recovery?

Sir Benj. Pray, doctor, was he not wounded by a thrust of a sword through the small guts?

Crab. Was it not by a bullet that lodged in the thorax?

Sir Benj. Nay, pray answer me.

Crab. Dear, dear doctor, speak. [*All pulling him.*]

Sir Oliv. Hey, hey, good people, are you all mad?—
Why, what the devil is the matter?—a sword through the small guts, and a bullet lodged in the thorax? What would you all be at?

Sir Benj. Then perhaps, Sir, you are not a doctor.

Sir Oliv. If I am, Sir, I am to thank you for my degree.

Crab. Only a particular friend, I suppose.

Sir Oliv. Nothing more, Sir.

Sir Benj. Then I suppose, as you are a friend, you can be better able to give us some account of his wounds.

Sir Oliv. Wounds!

Mrs Cand. What! hav'n't you heard he was wounded—the saddest accident!

Sir Benj. A thrust with a sword through the small guts.

Crab. A bullet in the thorax.

Sir Oliv. Good people, speak one at a time, I beseech you—You both agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

Crab.

Sir Benj. } Ay, ay, we both agree in that. *Sir Oliv.*

Sir Oliv. Then I will be bold to say, Sir Peter is one of the most imprudent men in the world, for here he comes, walking as if nothing had happened.

Enter SIR PETER.

My good friend, you are certainly mad to walk about in this condition; you should go to bed, you that have had a sword through your small guts, and a bullet lodged in your thorax.

Sir Pet. A sword through my small guts, and a bullet lodged in my thorax.

Sir Oliv. Yes, these worthy people would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor, in order to make me an accomplice.

Sir Pet. What is all this?

Sir Benj. Sir Peter, we are very glad to find the story of the duel is not true.

Crab. And exceedingly sorry for your other misfortunes.

Sir Pet. So, so all over the town already. (*Aside.*

Mrs Cand. Though, as Sir Peter was so good a husband, I pity him sincerely.

Sir Pet. Plague of your pity!

Crab. As you continued so long a bachelor, you was certainly to blame to marry at all.

Sir Pet. Sir, I desire you'll consider this is my own house.

Sir Benj. However, you must not be offended at the jests you'll meet on this occasion.

Crab. It is no uncommon case, that's one thing.

Sir Pet. I insist upon being master here; in plain terms, I desire you'll leave my house immediately.

Mrs Cand. Well, well, Sir, we are going, and you may depend upon it, we shall make the best of the story. [*Exit.*

Sir Benj. And tell how badly you have been treated.

Sir Pet. Leave my house directly. [*Exit Sir Benj.*

Crab. And how patiently you bear it. [*Exit Crab.*

Sir Pet. Leave my house, I say—Fiends, furies, there is no bearing of it!

Enter ROWLEY.

Sir Oliv. Well, Sir Peter I have seen my nephews.

Rowl.

Oliv.

Rowl. And Sir Oliver is convinced your judgment is right after all.

Sir Oliv. Aye, Joseph is the man.

Rowl. Such sentiments.

Sir Oliv. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Rowl. Oh, 'tis edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliv. He is a pattern to the young men of the age—But how comes it, Sir Peter, that you don't join in his praises?

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, we live in a damn'd wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Sir Oliv. Right, right, my old friend—But was you always so moderate in your judgment?

Rowl. Do you say so, Sir Peter, you who was never mistaken in your life?

Sir Pet. Oh, the plague of your jokes—I suppose you are acquainted with the whole affair.

Rowl. I am indeed, Sir.—I met Lady Teazle returning from Mr Surface's, so humbled, that she deign'd to beg even me to become her advocate.

Sir Pet. What! does Sir Oliver know it too?

Sir Oliv. Aye, aye, every circumstance.

Sir Pet. What! about the closet and the screen.

Sir Oliv. Yes, and the little French milliner too. I never laughed more in my life.

Sir Pet. And a very pleasant jest it was.

Sir Oliv. This is your man of sentiment, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. Oh, damn his sentiments.

Sir Oliv. You must have made a pretty appearance when Charles dragged you out of the closet.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, that was very diverting.

Sir Oliv. And egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down.

Sir Pet. My face when the screen was thrown down! Oh yes!—There's no bearing this. (*Aside.*)

Sir Oliv. Come, come, my old friend, don't be vexed, for I can't help laughing for the soul of me.—Ha, ha, ha.

Sir Pet. Oh, laugh on.—I am not vexed—no, no, it is the pleasantest thing in the world. To be the standing jest of all one's acquaintance, 'tis the happiest situation imaginable.

Rowl.

Rowl. See, Sir, yonder's my Lady Teazle coming this way, and in tears; let me beg of you to be reconciled.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, I'll leave Rowley to mediate between you, and take my leave; but you must make haste after me to Mr Surface's, where I go, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy. *[Exit.]*

Sir Pet. I'll be with you at the discovery; I should like to see it, though it is a vile unlucky place for discoveries. Rowley, *(looking out)* she's not coming this way.

Rowl. No, Sir, but she has left the room door open, and waits your coming.

Sir Pet. Well, certainly mortification is very becoming in a wife—Don't you think I had best let her pine a little longer?

Rowl. Oh, Sir, that's being too severe.

Sir Pet. I don't think so; the Letter I found from Charles was evidently intended for her.

Rowl. Indeed, Sir Peter, you are much mistaken.

Sir Pet. If I was convinced of that—see, Mr Rowley, she looks this way—what a remarkable elegant turn of the head she has—I have a good mind to go to her.

Rowl. Do, dear Sir.

Sir Pet. But when it is known that we are reconciled, I shall be laughed at more than ever.

Rowl. Let them laugh on, and retort their malice upon themselves, by shewing them you can be happy in spite of their slander.

Sir Pet. Faith, and so I will, Mr Rowley, and my Lady Teazle and I may still be the happiest couple in the country.

Rowl. O fye, Sir Peter, he that lays aside suspicion—

Sir Pet. My dear Rowley, if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter any thing like a sentiment again; I have had enough of that to last the remainder of my life. *[Exeunt.]*

G

SCENE

SCENE, JOSEPH'S Library.

Enter JOSEPH and Lady SNEERWELL.

L. Sneer. Impossible! Will not Sir Peter be immediately reconciled to Charles, and no longer oppose his union to Maria?

Jos. Can passion mend it?

L. Sneer. No, nor cunning neither. I was a fool to league with such a blunderer.

Jos. Sure, my Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer in this affair, and yet, you see, I bear it with calmness.

L. Sneer. Because the disappointment does not reach your heart; your interest was only concerned. Had you felt for Maria, what I do for that unfortunate libertine your brother, you would not be dissuaded from taking every revenge in your power.

Jos. Why will you rail at me for the disappointment!

L. Sneer. Are you not the cause? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in imposing upon Sir Peter, and supplanting your brother, but you must endeavour to seduce his wife. I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

Jos. Well, I own I am to blame—I have deviated from the direct rule of wrong. Yet, I cannot think circumstances are so bad as your Ladyship apprehends.

L. Sneer. No!

Jos. You tell me you have made another trial of Snake, that he still proves steady to our interest, and that he is ready, if occasion requires, to swear to a contract having been passed between Charles and your Ladyship.

L. Sneer. And what then?

Jos. Why, the letters which have been so carefully circulated, will corroborate his evidence, and prove the truth of the assertion. But I expect my uncle every moment, and must beg your Ladyship to retire into the next room.

L. Sneer.

suppose

L. Sneer. But if he should find me out?

Jos. I have no fear of that—Sir Peter won't tell for his own sake, and I shall soon find out Sir Oliver's weak side.

L. Sneer. Nay, I have no doubt of your abilities, only be constant to one villainy at a time.

Jos. Well, I will, I will.—(*Exit Lady Sneerwell.*)—It is confounded hard, though, to be baited by one's confederates in wickedness—(*knocking*)—Whom have we got here? My uncle Oliver I suppose—Oh, old Stanley again! How came he here? He must not stay—

Enter SIR OLIVER.

I told you already, Mr Stanley, that it was not in my power to relieve you.

Sir Oliv. But I hear, Sir, that Sir Oliver is arrived, and perhaps he might.

Jos. Well, Sir; you cannot stay now, Sir; but any other time, Sir, you shall certainly be relieved.

Sir Oliv. Oh, Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Jos. I must insist upon your going. Indeed, Mr Stanley, you can't stay.

Sir Oliv. Positively I must see Sir Oliver.

Jos. Then positively you shan't stay.

[*Pushing him out.*]

Enter CHARLES.

Char. Hey day! what's the matter? Why, who the devil have we got here! What! my little Premium! Oh, brother, you must not hurt my little broker. But hark'ye, Joseph; what, have you been borrowing money too?

Jos. Borrowing money! No, brother—We expect my uncle Oliver here every minute, and Mr Stanley insists upon seeing him.

Char. Stanley! Why his name is Premium.

Jos. No, no! I tell you his name is Stanley.

Char. But I tell you again his name is Premium.

Jos. It don't signify what his name is.

Char. No more it don't, as you say, brother; for I suppose he goes by half an hundred names, besides A.

B. at the coffee-houses. But old Noll must not come and catch my little broker here neither.

Jos. Mr Stanley, I beg—

Char. And I beg, Mr Premium—

Jos. You must go indeed, Mr Stanley.

Char. Aye, you must go, Mr Premium.

(Both pushing him.)

Enter Sir PETER, Lady TEAZLE, MARIA, and

ROWLEY.

Sir Pet. What, my old friend Sir Oliver! what's the matter?—In the name of wonder, were there ever two such ungracious nephews, to assault their uncle at his first visit.

L. Teaz. On my word, sir, it was well we came to your rescue.

Jos. Charles!

Char. Joseph!

Jos. Now our ruin is complete.

Char. Very.

Sir Pet. You find, Sir Oliver, your necessitous character of old Stanley could not protect you.

Sir Oliv. No! nor Premium neither. The necessities of the former could not extract a shilling from that benevolent gentleman there; and with the other I stood a worse chance than my ancestors, and had like to have been knocked down without being bid for. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley, look upon that elder nephew of mine; you both know what I have done for him, and how gladly I would have looked upon half my fortune as held only in trust for him. Judge then of my surprise and disappointment, at finding him destitute of truth, charity and gratitude!

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, I should be as much surprised as you, if I did not know him to be artful, selfish, and hypocritical.

L. Teaz. And if he pleads not guilty to all this, let him call on me to finish his character.

Sir Pet. Then I believe we need not add more; for if he knows himself, it will be a sufficient punishment for him that he is known by the world.

Char.

Char. If they talk this way to Honesty, what will they say to me by and by? *(Aside.)*

Jos. Sir Oliver, will you not honour me with a hearing?

Char. Now if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I should have time to recollect myself. *(Aside.)*

Sir Pet. I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself entirely.

Jos. I trust I could, Sir.

Sir Oliv. 'Plhaw! *(turns away from him)* and I suppose you could justify yourself too. *(To Charles.)*

Char. Not that I know of, sir.

Sir Oliv. What, my little Premium was let too much into the secret.

Char. Why yes, sir, but they were only family secrets, and should go no farther.

Rowl. Come, come, Sir Oliver, I am sure you cannot look upon Charles's follies with anger.

Sir Oliv. No, nor with gravity neither.—Do you know, Sir Peter, the young rogue has been selling me his ancestors; I have bought judges and Ruff officers by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as old china.

[During this speech Charles laughs behind his hat.]

Char. Why, that I have made free with the family canvas is true; my ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me when I tell you, (and upon my soul I would not say it if it was not so) if I don't appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is, because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction at seeing you my liberal benefactor.

[Embraces him.]

Sir Oliv. Charles, I forgive you; give me your hand again; the little H-looking fellow over the settee has made your peace for you.

Char. Then, Sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

L. Teaz. Sir Oliver, here is another, with whom I dare say Charles is no less anxious to be reconciled.

Sir Oliv. I have heard something of that attachment before, and with the ladies leave—if I construe right, that blush—

Sir Pet. Well, child, speak for yourself.

Mar. I have little more to say, than that I wish him happy, and for any influence I might once have had over his affections, I most willingly resign them to one who has a better claim to them.

Sir Pet. Hey! what's the matter now? While he was a rake and a profligate, you would hear of nobody else; and now that he is likely to reform, you won't have him. What's the meaning of all this?

Mar. His own heart, and lady Sneerwell, can best inform you.

Char. Lady Sneerwell!

Josf. I am very sorry, brother, I am obliged to speak to this point; but justice demands it from me; and Lady Sneerwell's wrongs can be no longer concealed.

Enter Lady SNEERWELL.

Sir Pet. Another French milliner! I believe he has one in every room in the house.

L. Sneer. Ungrateful Charles! well you may seem confounded and surprized at the indelicate situation to which your perfidy has reduced me.

Char. Pray uncle, is this another of your plots? for, as I live, this is the first I ever heard of it.

Josf. There is but one witness, I believe, necessary for the business.

Sir Pet. And that witness is Mr Snake—you were perfectly in the right in bringing him with you. Let him appear.

Rowl. Desire Mr Snake to walk in.—It is rather unlucky, madam, that he should be brought to confront, and not support your Ladyship.

Enter SNAKE.

L. Sneer. I am surprized! what, speak, villain! have you too conspired against me?

Snake. I beg your Ladyship ten thousand pardons; I must own you paid me very liberally for the lying questions, but I have unfortunately been offered double for speaking the truth.

Sir Pet. Plot and counter-plot—I give your Ladyship much joy of your negociation.

L. Sneer.

L. Sneer. May the torments of despair and disappointment light upon you all! [*Going.*]

L. Teaz. Hold, Lady Sneerwell; before you go, give me leave to return you thanks, for the trouble you and this gentleman took, in writing letters in my name to Charles, and answering them yourself;—and, at the same time, I must beg you will present my compliments to the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform them, that Lady Teazle licentiate, returns the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

L. Sneer. You too, madam! Provoking, Insolent!—may your husband live these fifty years! [*Exit.*]

L. Teaz. O Lord—what a malicious creature it is!

Sir Pet. Not for her last wish, I hope.

L. Teaz. Oh, no, no.

Sir Pet. Well, Sir—what have you to say for yourself? [*To Joseph.*]

Jos. Sir, I am so confounded that Lady Sneerwell should impose upon us all, by suborning Mr Snake, that I know not what to say—but—left her malice should prompt her to injure my brother—I had better follow her. [*Exit.*]

Sir Pet. Moral to the last.

Sir Oliv. Marry her, Joseph, marry her if you can—Oil and vinegar—you'll do very well together.

Rowl. Mr Snake, I believe we have no further occasion for you.

Snake. Before I go, I must beg pardon of these good ladies and gentlemen, for whatever trouble I have been the humble instrument of causing.

Sir Pet. You have made amends by your open confession.

Snake. But I must beg as a favour that it may never be spoken of.

Sir Pet. What! are you ashamed of having done one good action in your life?

Snake. Sir, I request you to consider that I live by the badness of my character, and if it was once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world. [*Exit.*]

Sir Oliv.

Lady-
Sneer.

Sir Oliv. Never fear, we shan't traduce you by saying any thing in your praise.

Sir Pet. There's a specious rogue for you.

L. Teaz. You see, Sir Oliver, it needed no great persuasion to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oliv. So much the better; I'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Sir Pet. What! before you ask the girl's consent!

Char. I have done that a long time since—above a minute ago—and she look'd—

Mar. O fie, Charles—I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word said.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, the less the better (*joining their hands*) there—and may your loves never know abatement.

Sir Pet. And may you live as happily together, as Lady Teazle and I—intend to do.

Char. I suspect, Rowley, I owe much to you.

Sir Oliv. You do, indeed.

Rowl. Sir, if I have failed in my endeavours to serve you, you would have been indebted to me for the attempt. But deserve to be happy, and you overpay me.

Sir Pet. Aye, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Char. Look ye, Sir Peter, as to reforming, I shall make no promises, and that I take to be the strongest proof that I intend setting about it. But here shall be my monitor, my gentle guide—can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, should'st wave thy beauty's sway,

Thou still must rule, because I will obey;

An humble fugitive from folly view,

No sanctuary near but love—and you;

You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,

For even scandal dies—if you approve.

(*Omnes exeunt.*)

EPILOGUE.

Written by MR COLMAN.

Spoken in the character of LADY TEAZLE.

I, WHO was late so volatile and gay,
Like a trade-wind, must now blow all one way;
Bend all my cares, my studies and my vows,
To one old rusty weather cock—my spouse;
So wills our virtuous bard—the pye-bald Bayes
Of crying epilogues and laughing plays.

Old batchelors, who marry smart young wives,
Learn from our play to regulate your lives!
Each bring his dear to town—all faults upon her—
London will prove the very source of honour.
Plung'd fairly in, like a cold bath, it serves,
When principles relax—to brace the nerves,
Such is my case—and yet I must deplore
That the gay dream of dissipation's o'er;
And say, ye fair, was ever lively wife,
Born with a genius for the highest life,
Like me, untimely blasted in her bloom;
Like me, condemn'd to such a dismal doom:
Save money—when I just knew how to waste it!
Leave London—just as I began to taste it!
Must I then watch the early crowing cock?
The melancholy ticking of a clock?
In the lone rustick hall for ever pounded,
With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats surrounded,
With humble curates can I now retire,
(While good Sir Peter-boozes with the squire)
And at back-gammon mortify my soul,
That pants for Lu, or flutters at a Vole?
Seven's the main! dear sound! that must expire,
Roast at hot cackles round a Christmas fire!

The

The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,
 * Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content,
 * Farewell the plumed-head—the cushion'd tete,
 * That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
 * The spirit stirring-drum! card drums I mean—
 * Spadille, old Trick, Pam, Basto, King and Queen.
 * And you, ye knockers, that with brazen throat,
 * The welcome visitor's approach denote,
 * Farewell! All quality of high renown,
 * Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious town,
 * Farewell! your revels I partake no more,
 * And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!"

All this I told our bard; he smil'd, and said 'twas clear
 I ought to play deep tragedy next year:

Mean while he drew wise morals from his play,
 And in these solemn periods stalk'd away.

"Blest were the fair, like you her faults who stopt,
 * And closed her follies when the curtain dropt!
 * No more in vice or error to engage,
 * Or play the fool at large on life's great stage!"

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PROLOGUE.

BY THE AUTHOR.

Spoken by MR WOODWARD and MR QUICK.

*Enter SERJEANT at LAW, and ATTORNEY following,
and giving a Paper.*

Serj. **W**HAT's here—a vile cramp hand! I cannot see
Without my spectacles. *Att.* He means his fee.
Nay, Mr Serjeant, good Sir, try again. *(Gives money—)*

Serj. The scrawl improves *(more)* O come, 'tis pretty
plain.

Hey! how's this?—*Dibble!*—sure it cannot be!

A Poet's Brief! A Poet and a Fee!

Att. Yea, Sir!—though you without reward, I know,
Would gladly plead the Muse's cause— *Serj.* So—so!
And if the Fee offends—your wrath should fall

On me— *Serj.* Dear *Dibble*, no offence at all—

Att. Some Sons of Phœbus—in the Courts we meet,

Serj. And fifty Sons of Phœbus in the Fleet!

Att. Nor pleads he worse, who with a decent sprig
Of Bays—adorns his legal waste of wig.

Serj. Full-bottom'd Heroes thus, on signs, unfurl
A leaf of laurel—in a grove of curl!

Yet tell your Client, that, in adverse days,
This wig is warmer than a bush of Bays.

Att. Do you then, Sir, my Client's place supply,
Profuse of robe, and prodigal of tye—

Do you, with all those blushing pow'rs of face,
And wonted bashful hesitating grace,
Rise on the Court, and flourish on the case.

[Exit.]

Serj. For practice then suppose—this Brief will shew it,—
Me, Serjeant Woodward,—Counsel for the Poet.

Us'd to the ground—I know 'tis hard to deal
 With this dread *Court*, from whence there's *no appeal*;
 No *Tricking* here, to blunt the edge of *Law*,
 Or damn'd in *Equity*—escape by *Flau*;
 But *Judgment* given—your *Sentence* must remain;
 —No *Writ of Error* lies—to *Drury-Lane*!
 Yet when so kind you seem—'tis past dispute,
 We gain some favour, if not *Costs of Suit*.
 No spleen is here! I see no hoarded fury;
 —I think I never fac'd a milder Jury!
 Sad else our plight!—where frowns are transportation,
 A hiss the gallows,—and a groan, damnation!
 But such the public candour, without fear
 My Client waves all *right of challenge* here.
 No Newsmen from *our Session* is dismiss'd,
 Nor Wit nor Critic *we* scratch off the list;
 His faults can never hurt another's ease,
 His crime at worst—a *bad attempt* to please:
 Thus all respecting, he appeals to all,
 And by the general voice will *stand or fall*.

PROLOGUE.

BY THE AUTHOR.

Spoken on the Tenth Night by Mrs BURKELEY.

GRANTED our Cause, our suit and trial o'er,
 The worthy Serjeant need appear no more:
 In pleading I a different Client chuse,
 He serv'd the Poet,—I would serve the Muse:
 Like him, I'll try to merit your applause,
 A female counsel in a female's cause.

Look on this form *,—where Humour quaint and fly,
 Dimples the cheek, and points the beaming eye:

Where

Pointing to the Figure of Comedy.

Where gay Invention seems to boast its wiles
 In amorous hint, and half-triumphant smiles;
 While her light masks or covers Satire's strokes,
 All hide the conscious blush her wit provokes.
 —Look on her well—does she seem form'd to teach?
 Shou'd you *expect* to hear this lady—preach?
 Is grey experience suited to her youth?
 Do solemn sentiments become that mouth?
 Bid her be grave; those lips should rebel prove
 To every theme that flanders mirth or love.

Yet thus adorn'd with every graceful art
 To charm the fancy, and yet reach the heart—
 Must we displace her? And instead advance
 The Goddess of the woeful countenance—
 The sentimental Muse!—Her emblems view,
 The Pilgrim's Progress, and a sprig of rue!
 View her—too chaste to look like flesh and blood—
 Primly pourtray'd on emblematic wood!
 There fix'd in usurpation shou'd she stand,
 She'll snatch the dagger from her sister's hand:
 And having made her votaries *weep a flood*,
 Good heaven! she'll end her Comedies in blood—
 Bid *Harry Woodward* break poor *Dunfall's* crown!
 Imprison *Quick*—and knock *Ned Shuter* down;
 While sad *Barfanti*—weeping o'er the scene—
 Shall stab herself—or poison *Mrs Green*.——

Such dire encroachments to prevent in time,
 Demands the Critic's voice—the Poet's rhyme.
 Can our light scenes add strength to Holy laws!
 Such puny patronage but hurts the cause:
 Fair Virtue scorns our feeble aid to ask;
 And moral truth disdains the trickster's scam.
 For here their fav'rite stands*, whose brow—severe
 And sad—claims Youth's respect, and Pity's tear;
 Who—when oppress'd by foes her worth creates—
 Can point a poignard at the Guilt she hates.

* Pointing to Tragedy.

CHARACTERS.

MEN.

SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE,	-	MR SHUTER.
CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE,	-	MR WOODWARD.
FAULKLAND,	-	MR LEWIS.
ACRES,	-	MR QUICK.
SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER,	-	MR CLINCH.
FAG,	-	MR LEE LEWE.
DAVID,	-	MR DUNSTALL.
COACHMAN,	-	MR FEARON.

WOMEN.

MRS MALAPROP,	-	MRS GREEN.
LYDIA LANGUISH,	-	MISS BARSANTI.
JULIA,	-	MRS BULKELEY.
LUCY,	-	MRS LESSINGHAM.

MAID, BOY, SERVANTS, &c.

SCENE, BATH.

TIME OF ACTION WITHIN ONE DAY.

THE
R I V A L S,
A COMEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A STREET IN BATH.

COACHMAN crosses the Stage—Enter FAG, looking after him.

Fag. **W**HAT!—Thomas!—Sure 'tis he—
What!—Thomas!—Thomas!

Coach. Hey! Odd's life!—Mr Fag!—give us your hand, my old fellow servant:

Fag. Excuse my glove, Thomas!—I'm dev'lish glad to see you, my lad; why, my prince of charioteers, you look as hearty! but who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath!

Coach. Sure, Master, Madam Julia, Harry, Mrs Kate, and the postillion be all come.

Fag. Indeed!

Coach. Aye! Master thought another fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit:—so he'd a mind to gi't the tip, and whip! we were all off at an hour's warning.

Fag. Aye, aye! hasty in every thing, or it would not be Sir Anthony Absolute!

Coach. But tell us, Mr Fag, how does young Master? Odd! Sir Anthony will stare to see the Captain here!

Fag. I do not serve Captain Absolute now.—

Coach. Why sure!—

Fag.

Fag. At present I am employ'd by Ensign Beverly.

Coach. I doubt, Mr Fag, you ha'nt changed for the better.

Fag. I have not changed, Thomas.

Coach. No ! why ~~didn't~~ you say you had left young Master ?

Fag. No.—Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle you no farther ;—Briefly then—Captain Absolute and Ensign Beverly are one and the same person.

Coach. The devil they are !

Fag. So it is indeed, Thomas ; and the *Ensign*—half of my master being on guard at present—the *Captain* has nothing to do with me.

Coach. So, so !—what, this is some freak, I warrant !—Do tell us, Mr Fag, the meaning o't—you know I ha' trusted you.

Fag. You'll be secret, Thomas ?

Coach. As a coach-horse.

Fag. Why then the cause of all this is—LOVE,—Love, Thomas, who (as you may get read to you) has been a masquerader ever since the days of Jupiter.

Coach. Aye, aye ;—I guessed there was a lady in the case ;—but pray why does your Master pass only for *Ensign* ?—now if he had sham'd *General* indeed—

Fag. Ah ! Thomas, there lies the mystery o' the matter.—Hark'ee, Thomas, my master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste ; a lady who likes him better as a *half pay Ensign*, than if she knew he was son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a-year.

Coach. That is an odd taste indeed !—but has she got the stuff, Mr Fag ; is she rich, hey ?

Fag. Rich !—why, I believe she owns half the flocks !—Z—ds ! Thomas, she could pay the national debt as easily as I could my washerwoman !—She has a lap dog that eats out of gold,—she feeds her parrot with small pearls,—and all her thread-papers are made of bank notes !

Coach. Bravo !—faith !—Odds ! I warrant she has a set of thousands at least :—but does she draw kindly with the Captain ?

Fag. As fond as pigeons.

Coach.

Coach. May one hear her name?

Fag. Miss Lydia Languish—But there is an old tough aunt in the way;—though by the bye—she has never seen my Master—for he got acquainted with Miss while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

Coach. Well—I wish they were once harnessed together in matrimony.—But pray, Mr Fag, what kind of a place is this Bath?—I ha' heard a deal of it—here's a mort o'merry making—hey?

Fag. Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well—'tis a good lounge; in the morning we go to the pump room (though neither my Master nor I drink the waters;) after breakfast we saunter on the parades, or play a game at billiards; at night we dance: but d—n the place, I'm tired of it; their regular hours stupify me—not a fiddle nor a card after eleven!—however, Mr Faulkland's gentleman and I keep it up a little in private parties;—I'll introduce you there, Thomas—you'll like him much.

Coach. Sure I know Mr Du Peign—you know his Master is to marry Madam Julia.

Fag. I had forgot.—But, Thomas, you must polish a little—indeed you must—Here now—this wig!—what the devil do you do with a wig, Thomas?—none of the London whips of any degree of ton wear wigs now.

Coach. More's the pity! more's the pity, I say—Odd's life! when I heard how the lawyers and doctors had took to their own hair, I thought how 'twould go next:—Odd rabbit it! when the fashion had got foot on the bar, I guess'd 'twould mount to the Box!—but 'tis all out of character, believe me, Mr Fag: and look'ye, I'll never gi' up mine—the lawyers and doctors may do as they will.

Fag. Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

Coach. Why, bless you, the gentlemen of thy profession's ben't all of a mind—for in our village now, thoff Jack Gauge the exciseman has ta'en to his carrots, there's little Dick the farrier swears he'll never forsake his bob, tho' all the college should appear with their own heads!

Fag.

Fag. Indeed ! well said Dick ! but hold—mark ! mark ! Thomas.

Coach. Zooks ! 'tis the Captain—Is that the lady with him ?

Fag. No ! no ! that is Madam Lucy—my Master's mistress's maid,—They lodge at that house—but I must after him to tell him the news.

Coach. Odd ! he's giving her money !—well, Mr Fag—

Fag. Good bye, Thomas.—I have an appointment in Gyd's Porch this evening at eight ; meet me there, and we'll make a little party. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II,

A Dressing-room in MRS MALAPROP'S Lodgings.

LYDIA sitting on a Sopha, with a Book in her hand.

LUCY, as just returned from a Message.

Lucy. Indeed, Ma'am, I travers'd half the town in search of it : I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath I ha'n't been at.

Lydia. And could not you get " The Reward of Constancy ?"

Lucy. No, indeed, Ma'am.

Lydia. Nor " The Fatal Connection ?"

Lucy. No, indeed, Ma'am.

Lydia. Nor " The Mistakes of the Heart ?"

Lucy. Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, Mr Bell said Miss Suckey Saunter had just fetch'd it away.

Lydia. Heigh-ho !—Did you enquire for " The Delicate Distress ?"

Lucy. —Or " The Memoirs of Lady Woodford ?" Yes indeed, ma'am.—I asked every where for it ; and I might have brought it from Mr Frederick's, but Lady Slattern Lounger, who had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's-ear'd it, it wa'n't fit for a christian to read.

Lydia. Heigh ho !—Yes, I always know when Lady Slattern has been before me.—She has a most observing thumb ; and I believe cherishes her nails for making

making marginal notes.—Well, child, what have you brought me?

Lucy. Oh! here ma'am.

[*Taking books from under her cloak, and from her pockets.*]

This is "The Gordian Knot."—and this "Peregrine Pickle." Here are "The Tears of Sensibility," and "Humphrey Clinker." This is "The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, written by herself."—and here the second volume of "The Sentimental Journey."

Lydia. Heigh-ho!—What are those books by the glais?

Lucy. The great one is only "The Whole Duty of Man," where I press a few blonds, Ma'am.

Lydia. Very well—give me the *sal volatile*.

Lucy. Is it in a blue cover, Ma'am.

Lydia. My smelling bottle, you simpleton!

Lucy. Oh, the drops!—here, Ma'am.

Lydia. Hold!—here's some one coming—quick, see who it is—

(*Exit Lucy.*)

Surely I heard cousin Julia's voice!

(*Re-enter Lucy.*)

Lucy. Lud! Ma'am, here is Miss Melville.

Lydia. Is it possible!—

Enter JULIA.

Lydia. My dearest Julia, how delighted am I! (*Embrace*) How unexpected was this happiness.

Julia. True, Lydia—and our pleasure is the greater;—but what has been the matter?—you were denied to me at first!

Lydia. Ah, Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you!—but first inform me what has conjur'd you to Bath?—Is Sir Anthony here?

Julia. He is—we arrived within this hour—and I suppose he will be hear to wait on Mrs Malaprop as soon as he is dress'd.

Lydia. Then before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress!—I know your gentle nature will sympathize with me, tho' your prudence may condemn me!—My letters have informed you of my

my whole connection with Beverly ;—but I have lost him, Julia !—my aunt has discovered our intercourse by a note she intercepted, and has confined me ever since !—Yet, would you believe it ? she has fallen absolutely in love with a tall Irish Baronet she met one night since we have been here at Lady Macshuttle's rout.

Julia. You jest, Lydia !

Lydia. No, upon my word.—She really carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a feigned name though, till she chuses to be known to him ;—but it is a *Delia* or a *Celia*, I assure you.

Julia. Then, surely, she is now more indulgent to her niece.

Lydia. Quite the contrary. Since she has discovered her own frailty, she has become more suspicious of mine. Then I must inform you of another plague !—That odious *Acres* is to be in Bath to-day ; so that I protest I shall be teased out of all spirits !

Julia. Come, come, Lydia, hope for the best—Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs Malaprop.

Lydia. But you have not heard the worst. Unfortunately I had quarrel'd with my poor Beverly, just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since, to make it up.

Julia. What was his offence ?

Lydia. Nothing at all !—But, I don't know how it was, as often as we had been together, we had never had a quarrel !—And, somehow, I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity.—So, last Thursday I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself that Beverly was at that time paying his addresses to another woman,—I sign'd it *your Friend unknown*, shew'd it to Beverly, charg'd him with his falshood, put myself in a violent passion, and vow'd I'd never see him more.

Julia. And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since ?

Lydia. 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out ; I intended only to have teased him three days and a half, and now I've lost him for ever.

Julia,

Julia. If he is as deserving and sincere as you have represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia, you tell me he is but an Ensign, and you have thirty thousand pounds!

Lydia. But you know I lose most of my fortune if I marry without my aunt's consent, till of age; and that is what I have determined to do, ever since I knew the penalty.—Nor could I love the man, who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

Julia. Nay, this is caprice!

Lydia. What, does Julia tax me with caprice?—I thought her lover Faulkland had enured her to it.

Julia. I do not love even *his* faults.

Lydia. But a-propos—you have sent to him I suppose?

Julia. Not yet, upon my word—nor has he the least idea of my being in Bath.—Sir Anthony's resolution was so sudden, I could not inform him of it.

Lydia. Well, Julia, you are your own mistress, (though under the protection of Sir Anthony) yet have you, for this long year been a slave to the caprice, to the whim, the jealousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the right of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious as a lover.

Julia. Nay, you are wrong entirely.—We were contracted before my father's death.—That, and some consequent embarrassments, have delayed what I know to be my Faulkland's most ardent wish.—He is too generous to trifle on such a point.—And for his character, you wrong him there too.—No, Lydia, he's too proud, too noble to be jealous; if he is captious, 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, without rudeness.—Unus'd to the fopperies of love, he is negligent to the little duties expected from a lover—but being unhackney'd in the passion, his affection is ardent and sincere; and as it engrosses his whole soul, he expects every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his.—Yet, though his pride calls for this full return—his humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him, which would entitle him to it; and not feeling why he should be lov'd to the degree he wishes, he

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still

still suspects that he is not lov'd enough :—This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours ; but I have learned to think myself his debtor, for those imperfections which arise from the ardour of his attachment.

Lydia. Well, I cannot blame you for defending him.—But tell me candidly, Julia, had he never sav'd your life, do you think you should have been attach'd to him as you are ?—Believe me, the rude blast that overset your boat was a prosperous gale of love to him.

Julia. Gratitude may have strength'n'd my attachment to Mr Faulkland, but I lov'd him before he had preserv'd me ; yet surely that alone were an obligation sufficient——

Lydia. Obligation !——Why a water spaniel would have done as much ?—Well, I should never think of giving my heart to a man because he could swim !

Julia. Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

Lydia. Nay, I do but jest.—What's here ?

Enter Lucy in a hurry.

Lucy. O Ma'am, here is Sir Anthony Absolute just come home with your aunt.

Lydia. They'll not come here.—Lucy do you watch.
(*Exit Lucy.*)

Julia. Yet I must go.—Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to shew me the town.—I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long as she chooses, with her select words so ingeniously *misapplied*, without being *mispronounced*.

(*Re-enter Lucy.*)

Lucy. O Lud ! ma'am, they are both coming up stairs.

Lydia. Well, I'll not detain you, Coz.—Adieu, my dear Julia, I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland.—There—through my room you'll find another stair-case.

Julia. Adieu.—(*Embrace*) (*Exit Julia.*)

Lydia. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books.—Quick, quick.—Fling *Peregrine Pickle* under the toilet—throw *Roderick Random* into the closet—put *The Innocent*

Innocent Adultery into *The whole duty of man*—thrust *Lord Ainsworth* under the sofa—cram *Ovid* behind the bolster—there—put *The Man of Feeling* into your pocket—so, so, now lay *Mrs Chapone* in sight, and leave *Fordyce's Sermons* open on the table.

Lucy. O burn it, Ma'am, the hair-dresser has torn away as far as *Proser Pride*.

Lydia. Never mind—open at—*Sobriety*.—Fling me *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*.—Now for 'em.

Enter MRS MALAPROP and SIR ANTHONY
ABSOLUTE.

Mrs Mal. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the delinquent simpleton, who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Lydia. Madam, I thought you once——

Mrs Mal. You thought, Miss?—I don't know any business you have to think at all.—Thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow—to illiterate him quite from your memory.

Lydia. Ah, Madam! our memories are independent of our wills.—It is not so easy to forget.

Mrs Mal. But I say it is, Miss; there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chooses to set about it.—I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle as if he had never existed—and thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

Sir Anth. Why sure she won't pretend to remember what she's order'd not!—aye, this comes of her reading!

Lydia. What crime, Madam, have I committed to be treated thus?

Mrs Mal. Now don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter; you know I have proof contravertible of it.—But tell me, will you promise to do as you're bid?—Will you take a husband of your friend's choosing?

Lydia. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Mrs Mal. What business have you, Miss, with *preference* and *aversion*? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little *aversion*. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a black-a-moor—and yet, Miss, you are sensible what a wife I made!—and when it pleas'd heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed!—But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverly?

Lydia. Could I belie my thoughts so far, as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs Mal. Take yourself to your room.—You are fit company for nothing else but your ill humours.

Lydia. Willingly, Ma'am, I cannot change for the worse. [Exit Lydia.]

Mrs Mal. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wonder'd at, Ma'am—all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read.—Had I a thousand daughters, by heaven! I'd as soon have them taught the black art as the alphabet!

Mrs Mal. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthrope.

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library!—She had a book in each hand—they were half bound volumes, with marble covers!—From that moment I guess'd how full of duty I should see her mistress!

Mrs Mal. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an ever green tree of diabolical knowledge!—It blossoms through the year!—And depend on it, Mrs Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs Mal. Fie, fie, Sir Anthony, you surely speak laconically.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs Malaprop, in moderation, now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs Mal.

Mrs Mal. Observe me, Sir Anthony.—I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance—I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or Algebra, or Simony, or Fluxions, or Paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning—neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments:—But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice.—Then, Sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts;—and as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry; that she might know something of the contagious countries;—but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mis-spell, and mis-pronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying.—This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know;—and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though I must confess, that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every word you say is upon my side of the question.—But, Mrs Malaprop, to the more important point in debate,—you say, you have no objection to my proposal.

Mrs Mal. None, I assure you.—I am under no positive engagement with Mr Acres, and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

Sir Anth. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly.—He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs Mal. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side—

Sir Anth. Objection!—let him object if he dare!—No, no, Mrs Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demer puts me in a phrenzy directly.—My process was
I 3 always

always very simple—in their younger days, 'twas “ Jack, do this ; ”—if he demurr'd—I knock'd him down—and if he grumbled at that—I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs Mal. Aye, and the properest way, o'my conscience !—nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity.—Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations ;—and I hope you will represent *her* to the Captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently.—Well, I must leave you—and let me beg you, *Mrs Malaprop*, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl ;—take my advice—keep a tight hand—if she rejects this proposal—clap her under lock and key : and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about ! [Exit Sir Anth.]

Mrs Mal. Well, at any rate I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition.—She has somehow discovered my partiality for Sir Lucius O'Trigger—sure, Lucy can't have betray'd me !—No, the girl is such a simpleton, I should have made her confess it.—Lucy !—Lucy !—*(calls.)*—Had she been one of your artificial ones, I should never have trusted her.

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. Did you call, Ma'am ?

Mrs Mal. Yes, girl.—Did you see Sir Lucius while you was out ?

Lucy. No, indeed, Ma'am, not a glimpse of him.

Mrs Mal. You are sure, Lucy, that you never mentioned—

Lucy. O Gemini ! I'd sooner cut my tongue out.

Mrs Mal. Well, don't let your simplicity be imposed on.

Lucy. No, Ma'am.

Mrs Mal. So, come to me presently, and I'll give you another letter to Sir Lucius ;—but mind, Lucy—if ever you betray what you are entrusted with—(unless it be other people's secrets to me) you forfeit my
malevolence

malevolence for ever; and your being a simpleton shall be no excuse for your locality. [Exit Mrs Mal.

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha!—So, my dear *Simplicity*, let me give you a little respite—(altering her manner)—let girls in my station be as fond as they please of appearing expert, and knowing in their trusts; commend me to a mask of *filliness*, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it!—Let me see to what account have I turn'd my *Simplicity* lately.—(looks at a paper.)—For abetting *Miss Lydia Langwisp* in a design of running away with an *Ensign*!—in money—*sundry times*—*twelve pound twelve*—*gowns, five*—*hats, rustles, caps, &c. &c.*—*numberless*!—From the said *Ensign*, within this last month, *six guineas and a half*.—About a quarter's pay!—Item, from *Mrs Malaprop*, for betraying the young people to her—when I found matters were likely to be discovered—*two guineas, and a black paduasoy*.—Item from *Mr Acres*, for carrying divers letters—which I never deliver'd—*two guineas and a pair of buckles*.—Item, from *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*—*three crowns*—*two gold pocket pieces*—and a *silver snuff-box*!—Well done, *Simplicity*! yet I was forced to make my *Hibernian* believe, that he was corresponding, not with the *Aunt*, but with the *Niece*: for though not over rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortune. [Exit.

ACT II.

SCENE I. CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE'S Lodgings.

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE and FAG.

Fag. SIR, while I was there Sir Anthony came in: I told him, you had sent me to enquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

Abs. And what did he say, on hearing I was at Bath?

Fag. Sir, in my life I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished! He started back two or three
pages,

pieces, rapt out a dozen interjected oaths, and asked, what the devil had brought you here?

Abf. Well, Sir, and what did you say?

Fag. O, I lied, Sir—I forgot the precise lie, but you may depend on't, he got no truth from me. Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I should be glad to fix what *has* brought us to Bath, in order that we may lie a little consistently.—Sir Anthony's servants were curious, Sir, very curious indeed.

Abf. You have said nothing to them?—

Fag. O, not a word, Sir—not a word.—Mr Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips)—

Abf. 'Sdeath!—you rascal! you have not trusted him!

Fag. O, no, Sir—no—no—not a syllable, upon my veracity!—He was, indeed, a little inquisitive; but I was sly, Sir, devilish sly!—My master, (said I,) honest Thomas, (you know, Sir, one says *honest* to one's inferiors) is come to Bath to *recruit*—Yes, Sir—I said, *to recruit*—and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, Sir, is nothing to him, nor any one else.

Abf. Well—*recruit* will do—let it be so—

Fag. O, Sir, *recruit* will do surprisingly—indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas, that your honour had already enlisted five disbanded chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard markers.

Abf. You blockhead, never say more than is necessary.

Fag. I beg pardon, Sir—I beg pardon—But with submission, a lie is nothing unless one supports it.—Sir, whenever I draw on my invention, for a good current lie, I always forge indorsements as well as the bill.

Abf. Well, take care you don't hurt your credit, by offering too much security.—Is Mr Faulkland returned?

Fag. He is above, Sir, changing his dress.

Abf. Can you tell whether he has been informed of Sir Anthony's and Miss Melville's arrival?

Fag.

Fag. I fancy not, Sir; he has seen no one since he came in, but his gentleman, who was with him at Bristol.—I think, Sir, I hear Mr Faulkland coming down—

Abf. Go, tell him, I am here.

Fag. Yes, Sir—*(going)* I beg pardon, Sir, but should Sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember, that we are recruiting, if you please.

Abf. Well, well.

Fag. And in tenderness to my character, if your honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I shall esteem it as an obligation; for though I never scruple a lie to serve my master, yet it hurts one's conscience to be found out. *[Exit.]*

Abf. Now for my whimsical friend—if he does not know that his mistress is here, I'll tease him a little before I tell him—

— *Enter FAULKLAND.*

Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again; you are punctual in your return.

Faulk. Yes; I had nothing to detain me, when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you? How stand matters between you and Lydia?

Abf. Faith, much as they were; I have not seen her since our quarrel; however, I expect to be recalled every hour.

Faulk. Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once?

Abf. What, and lose two-thirds of her fortune? You forget that, my friend.—No, no, I could have brought her to that long ago.

Faulk. Nay then, you trifle too long—if you are sure of her, propose to the aunt in your own character, and write to Sir Anthony for his consent.

Abf. Softly, softly, for though I am convinced my little Lydia would elope with me as Ensign Beverly, yet am I by no means certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friend's consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune

ca

on my side; no, no, I must prepare her gradually for the discovery, and make myself necessary to her, before I risk it.—Well, but Faulkland, you'll dine with us to-day at the Hotel?

Faulk. Indeed I cannot; I am not in spirits to be of such a party.

Abf. By Heavens! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover!—Do love like a man.

Faulk. I own I am unfit for company.

Abf. Am not I a lover; aye, and a romantic one too? Yet do I carry every where with me such a confounded sarrago of doubts, fears, hopes, wishes, and all the flimsy furniture of a country Miss's brain!

Faulk. Ah! Jack, your heart and soul are not, like mine, fixed immutably on one only object.—You throw for a large stake, but losing—you could stake, and throw again;—but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed, were to be strip of all.

Abf. But for Heaven's sake! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present?

Faulk. What grounds for apprehension did you say? Heavens! are there not a thousand! I fear for her spirits—her health—her life—My absence may fret her; her anxiety for my return, her fears for me, may oppress her gentle temper. And for her health—does not every hour bring me cause to be alarmed? If it rains, some shower may even then have chilled her delicate frame!—If the wind be keen, some rude blast may have affected her! The heat of noon, the dews of the evening, may endanger the life of her, for whom only I value mine. O! Jack, when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension!

Abf. Aye, but we may chuse whether we will take the hint or not.—So then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia were well and in spirits, you would be intirely content.

Faulk.

Faulk. I should be happy beyond measure—I am anxious only for that.

Abf. Then to cure your anxiety at once—Miss Melville is in perfect health, and is at this moment in Bath.

Faulk. Nay, Jack—don't trifle with me.

Abf. She is arrived here with my father within this hour.

Faulk. Can you be serious?

Abf. I thought you knew Sir Anthony better than to be surprised at a sudden whim of this kind.—Seriously then, it is as I tell you—upon my honour.

Faulk. My dear friend!—Hollo, Du Peigne!—my hat—my dear Jack—now nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, Mr Acres just arrived is below.

Abf. Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of Sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your mistress has been ever since you left her.—Fag, shew the gentleman up. *[Exit Fag.]*

Faulk. What, is he much acquainted in the family?

Abf. O, very intimate: I insist on your not going: besides, his character will divert you.

Faulk. Well, I should like to ask him a few questions.

Abf. He is likewise a rival of mine—that is of my other self, for he does not think his friend Captain Absolute ever saw the lady in question;—and it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of *one Beverley*, a concealed sculking rival, who—

Faulk. Hush!—He's here.

Enter ACRES.

Acres. Hah, my dear friend, noble captain, and honest Jack, how do'st thou? just arrived faith, as you see.—Sir, your humble servant. Warm work on the roads, Jack—Odds whips and wheels! I've travelled like a Comet, with a tail of dust all the way as long as the Mall.

Abf. Ah! Bob, you are indeed an excentric Planet, but we know your attractions hither give me leave to introduce

Faulk.

introduce Mr Faulkland to you ; Mr Faulkland, Mr Acres.

Acres. Sir, I am most heartily glad to see you : Sir, I solicit your connections.—Hey, Jack—what this is Mr Faulkland, who——

Abf. Aye, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr Faulkland.

Acres. Od'so ! she and your father can be but just arrived before me—I suppose you have seen them.—Ah ! Mr Faulkland, you are indeed a happy man.

Faulk. I have not seen Miss Melville yet, Sir.—I hope she enjoyed full health and spirits in Devonshire ?

Acres. Never knew her better in my life, Sir,—never better.—Odd's Blushes and Blooms ! she has been as healthy as the German Spa.

Faulk. Indeed !—I did hear that she had been a little indisposed.

Acres. False, false, Sir, only said to vex you : Quite the reverse I assure you.

Faulk. There, Jack, you see she has the advantage of me ; I had almost fretted myself ill.

Abf. Now are you angry with your mistress for not having been sick.

Faulk. No, no, you misunderstand me :—Yet surely a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love.—Now confess—isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling heath ?

Abf. O, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence to be sure !

Acres. Good apartments, Jack.

Faulk. Well, Sir, but you was saying Miss Melville has been so exceedingly well—what then, she has been merry and gay I suppose ?—Always in spirits—hey ?

Acres. Merry, Odds Crickets ! she has been the bell and spirit of the company wherever she has been—so lively and entertaining ! so full of wit and humour !

Faulk. There, Jack, there.—O, by my soul ! there is an innate levity in woman, that nothing can overcome.—What ! happy and I away !

Abf. Have done :—how foolish this is ! just now you were only apprehensive for your mistress's spirits.

Faulk.

Faulk. Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the company?

Abs. No, indeed, you have not.

Faulk. Have I been lively and entertaining?

Abs. O, upon my word, I acquit you.

Faulk. Have I been full of wit and humour?

Abs. No, faith, to do you justice, you have been confoundedly stupid indeed.

Acres. What's the matter with the gentleman?

Abs. He is only expressing his great satisfaction at hearing Julia has been so well and happy—that's all—hey, Faulkland?

Faulk. Oh! I am rejoiced to hear it—yes, yes, she has a *happy* disposition!

Acres. That she has indeed—then she is so accomplished—so sweet a voice—so expert at her harpsichord—such a mistress of flat and sharp, squallante, rumblante, and quiverante!—there was this time month—Odds Minums and Crotchets! how she did chirup at Mrs Piano's Concert.

Faulk. There again, what say you to this? you see she has been all mirth and song—not a thought of me!

Abs. Pho! man, is not music the food of love?

Faulk. Well, well, it may be so.—Pray, Mr—, what's his d—d name?—Do you remember what songs Miss Melville sung?

Acres. Not I indeed.

Abs. Stay now, they were some pretty, melancholy purling stream airs, I warrant; perhaps you may recollect;—did she sing—“*When absent from my soul's delight*?”

Acres. No that wa'n't it.

Abs. Or.—“*Go, gentle gales!*”—“*Go, gentle gales!*”
—(sings.)

Acres. O no! nothing like it.—Odds! now I recollect one of them—“*My heart's my own, my will is free.*”—(sings.)

Faulk. Fool! fool that I am! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler! S'death! to make herself the pipe and ballad monger of a circle! to soothe her light heart

heart with catches and glees!—What can you say to this, Sir?

Abf. Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, Sir.

Faulk. Nay, nay, nay—I'm not sorry that she has been happy—no, no, I am glad of that—I would not have had her sad or sick—yet surely a sympathetic heart would have shewn itself even in the choice of a song—she might have been temperately healthy, and somehow plaintively gay;—but she has been dancing too, I doubt not!

Acres. What does the gentleman say about dancing?

Abf. He says the lady we speak of dances as well as she sings.

Acres. Aye truly, does she—there was at our last race ball——

Faulk. Hell and the devil! There! there—I told you so! I told you so! Oh! she thrives in my absence!—Dancing! but her whole feelings has been in opposition with mine;—I have been anxious, silent, pensive, sedentary—my days have been hours of care, my nights of watchfulness.—She has been all health! spirit! laugh! song! dance!—Oh! d—n'd, d—n'd levity!

Abf. For heaven's sake! Faulkland, don't expose yourself so.—Suppose she has danced, what then?—does not the ceremony of society often oblige—

Faulk. Well, well, I'll contain myself—perhaps as you say—for form sake.—What, Mr Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a minuet—hey?

Acres. O I dare insure her for that—but what I was going to speak of was her *Country dancing*:—Odds swimings! she has such an air with her!—

Faulk. Now disappointment on her!—defend this, Absolute, why don't you defend this?—Country-dances! jiggs, and reels! am I to blame now? A minuet I could have forgiven—I should not have minded that—I say I should not have regarded a minuet—but *country-dances*! Z—ds! had she made one in a *cotillon*—I believe I could have forgiven even that—but to be monkey-led for a night!—to run the gauntlet through

a string of amorous palming puppies!—to shew paces like a managed filly!—O Jack, there never can be but *one* man in the world, whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair with in a *country dance*; and even then, the rest of the couples should be her great uncles and aunts!

Abf. Aye, to be sure!—grand-fathers and grand-mothers!

Faulk. If there be one vicious mind in the set, 'twill spread like a contagion—the action of the pulse beats to the lascivious movement of the jig—their quivering warm breath'd sighs impregnate the very air—the atmosphere becomes electrical to love, and each amorous spark darts through every link of the chain!—I must leave you—I own I am somewhat flurried—and that confounded looby has perceived it. [Going.]

Abf. Nay, but stay, Faulkland, and thank Mr Acres for his good news.

Faulk. D—n his news!

[Exit Faulkland.]

Abf. Ha! ha! ha! poor Faulkland five minutes since—“nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness!”

Acres. The gentleman wa'n't angry at my praising his mistress, was he?

Abf. A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

Acres. You don't say so? Ha! ha! jealous of me—that's a good joke.

Abf. There's nothing strange in that, Bob; let me tell you, that sprightly grace and insinuating manner of your's will do some mischief among the girls here.

Acres. Ah! you joke—ha! ha! mischief—ha! ha! but you know I am not my own property, my dear Lydia has forestalled me.—She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly—but odds frogs and tambours! I shan't take matters so here—now ancient madam has no voice in it—I'll make my old cloaths know who's master—I shall straitway cashier the hunting-frock—and render my leather breeches incapable—My hair has been in training some time.

Abf. Indeed!

Acres. Aye—and tho'ff the side curls are a little restive, my hind part takes it very kindly.

Abf. O, you'll polish, I doubt not.

Acres. Absolutely I propose so—then if I can find out this Ensign Beverly, odds triggers and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't.

Abf. Spoke like a man—but, pray, Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing—

Acres. Ha! ha! you've taken notice of it—'tis genteel, isn't it?—I did'nt invent it myself though; but a commander in our militia—a great scholar, I assure you—says that there is no meaning in the common oaths, and nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable;—because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, but would say by Jove! or by Bacchus! or by Mars! or by Venus! or by Pallas! according to the sentiment—so that to swear with propriety, says my little Major, the “oath should be an echo to the sense;” and this we call the *oath referential*, or *sentimental swearing*—ha! ha! ha! 'tis genteel, isn't it?

Abf. Very genteel, and very new indeed—and I dare say will supplant all other figures of imprecation.

Acres. Aye, aye, the best terms will grow obsolete.—Damns have had their day.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, there is a gentleman below desires to see you—Shall I shew him into the parlour?

Abf. Aye—you may.

Acres. Well, I must begone—

Abf. Stay; who is it, Fag?

Fag. Your father, Sir.

Abf. You puppy, why didn't you shew him up directly? *[Exit Fag.]*

Acres. You have some business with Sir Anihony.—I expect a message from Mrs Malaprop at my lodgings—I have sent also to my dear friend Sir Lucius O'Trigger.—Adieu, Jack, we must meet at night, when you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

Abf.

Abf. That I will with all my heart. [*Exit Acres.*
Now for a parental lecture—I hope he has heard
nothing of the business that has brought me here—I
wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with
all my soul!

Enter SIR ANTHONY.

Sir, I am delighted to see you here; and looking so
well!—your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive
for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack,—
What, you are recruiting here, hey?

Abf. Yes, Sir, I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though
I did not expect it, for I was going to write to you on
a little matter of business.—Jack, I have been considering
that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably
not trouble you long.

Abf. Pardon me, Sir, I never saw you look more
strong and hearty; and I pray frequently that you may
continue so.

Sir Anth. I hope your prayers may be heard, with
all my heart. Well then, Jack, I have been considering
that I am so strong and hearty, I may continue to
plague a long time.—Now, Jack, I am sensible that the
income of your commission, and what I have hitherto
allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your
spirit.

Abf. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have
my boy make some figure in the world.—I have resolved,
therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

Abf. Sir, your kindness overpowers me—such generosity
makes the gratitude of reason more lively than the
sensations even of filial affection.

Sir Anth. I am glad you are so sensible of my attention—
and you shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

Abf. Let my future life, Sir, speak my gratitude;
I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence.

—Yet, Sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

Sir Anth. O, that shall be as your wife chuses.

Abf. My wife, Sir!

Sir Anth. Aye, aye, settle that between you—settle that between you.

Abf. A wife, Sir, did you say?

Sir Anth. Aye, a wife—why, did not I mention her before?

Abf. Not a word of her, Sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so!—I mustn't forget *her* though.—Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by a marriage—the fortune is saddled with a wife—but I suppose that makes no difference.

Abf. Sir! Sir!—you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

Abf. I was, Sir, you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

Sir Anth. Why—what difference does that make? Odd's life, Sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

Abf. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase.—Pray, Sir, who is the lady?

Sir Anth. What's that to you, Sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

Abf. Sure, Sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir Anth. I am sure, Sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to *object* to a lady you know nothing of.

Abf. Then, Sir, I must tell you plainly, that my inclinations are fix'd on another—my heart is engaged to an angel.

Sir Anth. Then pray let it send an excuse.—It is very sorry—but *business* prevents it's waiting on her.

Abf. But my vows are pledged to her.

Sir Anth. Let her foreclose, Jack; let her foreclose; they are not worth redeeming; besides, you have the angel's vows in exchange, I suppose; so there can be no loss there.

Abf.

Alf. You must excuse me, Sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Hark'ee, Jack ;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool,—quite cool ; but take care—you know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted ;—no one more easily led—when I have my own way ;—but don't put me in a frenzy.

Alf. Sir, I must repeat it—in this I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now d—n me ! if ever I call you Jack again while I live !

Alf. Nay, Sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word ! not one word ! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't by—

Alf. What, Sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness ! to—

Sir Anth. Z—ds ! firrah ! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose ; she shall have a hump on each shoulder ; she shall be as crooked as the Crescent ; her one eye shall roll like the Bull's in Cox's Museum—she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, firrah !—yet I'll make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty.

Alf. This is reason and moderation indeed !

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy ! no grinning, jackanapes ?

Alf. Indeed, Sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, Sir, I know you are laughing in your sleeve ; I know you'll grin when I am gone, firrah !

Alf. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

Sir Anth. None of your passion, Sir ! none of your violence ; if you please—It won't do with me, I promise you.

Alf. Indeed, Sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do.

Alf. Nay, Sir, upon my word.

Sir Anth. So you will fly out! can't you be cool, like me? What the devil good can *Passion* do!—*Passion* is of no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate!—There you sneer again!—don't provoke me!—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog!—you play upon the meekness of my disposition!—Yet take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this; if you then agree without any condition, to do every thing on earth that I chuse, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you—If not, z—ds! don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-three pence, in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you! and d—n me! if ever I call you Jack again! [Exit *Sir Anth.*

ABSOLUTE *solus.*

Alf. Mild, gentle, considerate father—I kiss your hands—What a tender method of giving his opinion in these matters *Sir Anthony* has! I dare not trust him with the truth.—I wonder what old wealthy hag it is that he wants to bestow on me!—yet he married himself for love! and was in his youth a bold intriguer, and a gay companion!

Enter *FAG.*

Fag. Assuredly, Sir, your father is wrath to a degree; he comes down stairs eight or ten steps at a time—muttering, growling, and thumping the bannisters all the way; I, and the cook's dog, stand bowing at the door—rap! he gives me a stroke on the head with his cane; bids me carry that to my master, then kicking the turnspit into the area, d—ns us all for a puppy triumvirate!—Upon my credit, Sir, were I

you

your place, and found my father such very bad company, I should certainly drop his acquaintance.

Abf. Cease your impertinence, Sir, at present.—Did you come in for nothing more?—Stand out of the way!

[*Pushes him aside and exit.*]

FAG. solus.

Fag. Soh! Sir Anthony trims my master; he is afraid to reply to his father—then vents his spleen on poor Fag!—When one is vexed by one person, to revenge one's self on another, who happens to come in the way—is the vilest injustice; Ah! it shews the worst temper—the basest——

Enter ERRAND BOY.

Boy. Mr Fag! Mr Fag! your master calls you.

Fag. Well! you little, dirty puppy, you need not baul so!—The meanest disposition! the——

Boy. Quick, quick, Mr Fag.

Fag. Quick! quick! you impudent jackanapes! am I to be commanded by you too? you little, impertinent, insolent, kitchen-bred—— [*Exit kicking and beating him.*]

SCENE II. *The North Parade.*

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. So—I shall have another rival to add to my mistress's list—Captain Absolute.—However, I shall not enter his name till my purse has received notice in form. Poor Acres is dismissed!—Well, I have done him a last friendly office, in letting him know that Beverley was here before him.—Sir Lucius is generally more punctual, when he expects to hear from his dear *Delia*, as he calls her:—I wonder he's not here!—I have a little scruple of conscience from this deceit; though I should not be paid so well, if my hero knew that *Delia* was near fifty, and her own mistress.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir Luc. Hah! my little ambassadress—upon my conscience I have been looking for you; I have been on the South Parade this half-hour.

Lucy.

Lucy. (*Speaking simply*) O gemini! and I have been waiting for your worship on the North.

Sir Luc. Faith!—may be, that was the reason we did not meet; and it is very comical too, how you could go out and I not see you—for I was only taking a nap at the Parade Coffee-house, and I chose the *window* on purpose that I might not miss you.

Lucy. My stars! Now I'd wager a sixpence I went by while you were asleep.

Sir Luc. Sure enough it must have been so—and I never dreamt it was so late, till I waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me?

Lucy. Yes, but I have—I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

Sir Luc. O faith! I guessed you weren't come empty-handed—well—let me see what the dear creature says.

Lucy. There, Sir Lucius. (*Gives him a letter*).

Sir Luc. (*Reads*) "*Sir—there is often a sudden incentive pulse in love, that has a greater induction than years of domestic combination: such was the commotion I felt at the first superfluous view of Sir Lucius O'Trigger.*" Very pretty, upon my word. "*Female punctuation forbids me to say more; yet let me add, that it will give me joy infallible to find Sir Lucius worthy the last criterion of my affections.*"

DELIA."

Upon my conscience! Lucy, your Lady is a great mistress of language. Faith, she's quite the queen of the dictionary!—for the devil a word dare refuse coming at her call—though one would think it was quite out of hearing.

Lucy. Aye, Sir, a lady of her experience.

Sir Luc. Experience! what at seventeen?

Lucy. O true, Sir—but then she reads so—my stars! how she will read off hand!

Sir Luc. Faith, she must be very deep read to write this way—though she is rather an arbitrary writer too—for here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get their *habeas corpus* from any court in Christendom.

Lucy.

Lucy. Ah! Sir Lucius, if you were to hear how she talks of you!

Sir Luc. O tell her, I'll make her the best husband in the world, and Lady O'Trigger into the bargain!—But we must get the old gentlewoman's consent—and do every thing fairly.

Lucy. Nay, Sir Lucius, I thought you wa'n't rich enough to be so nice!

Sir Luc. Upon my word, young woman, you have hit it:—I am so poor, that I can't afford to do a dirty action.—If I did not want money, I'd steal your mistress and her fortune with a great deal of pleasure.—However, my pretty girl, (*gives her money,*) here's a little something to buy you a ribband; and meet me in the evening, and I'll give you an answer to this. So, huffy, take a kiss before-hand, to put you in mind.

[*Kisses her.*]

Lucy. O lud! Sir Lucius—I never seed such a gentleman! my lady won't like you if you're so impudent.

Sir Luc. Faith she will, Lucy—that same—pho! what's the name of it!—*Modesty!*—is a quality in a lover more praised by the women than liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether Sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her fifty—my dear.

Lucy. What, would you have me tell her a lie?

Sir Luc. Ah then, you baggage! I'll make it a truth presently.

Lucy. For shame now; here is some one coming.

Sir Luc. O faith, I'll quiet your conscience!

[*Sees FAG.—Exit, humming a tune.*]

Enter FAG.

Fag. So, so, Ma'am. I humbly beg pardon.

Lucy. O lud!—now, Mr Fag—you hurry one so.

Fag. Come, come, Lucy, here's no one bye—so a little less simplicity, with a grain or too more sincerity, if you please—You play false with us, Madam.—I saw you give the Baronet a letter.—My master shall know this—and if he don't call him out—I will.

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha! you gentlemen's gentlemen be so hasty.—That letter was from Mrs Malaprop, my dear.—She is taken with Sir Lucius's address.

Fag.

Lucy.

Fag. How! what tastes some people have!—Why I suppose I have walked by her window an hundred times.—But what says our young lady? Any message to my master?

Lucy. Sad news! Mr Fag.—A worse rival than Acres! Sir Anthony Absolute has proposed his son.

Fag. What, Captain Absolute?

Lucy. Even so.—I overheard it all.

Fag. Ha! ha! ha! very good, faith,—Good bye, Lucy, I must away with this news.

Lucy. Well—you may laugh—but it is true, I assure you. [Going.]

But—Mr Fag—tell your master not to be cast down by this.

Fag. O, he'll be so disconsolate!

Lucy. And charge him not to think of quarrelling with young Absolute.

Fag. Never fear!—never fear!

Lucy. Be sure—bid him keep up his spirits.

Fag. We will—we will. [Exit severally.]

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The North Parade.*

Enter ABSOLUTE.

Abf. 'TIS just as Fag told me, indeed.—Whimsical enough, faith! My father wants to force me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with!—He must not know of my connection with her yet a-while.—He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters.—However, I'll read my recantation instantly.—My conversion is something sudden, indeed—but I can assure him it is very sincere.—So, so,—here he comes.—He looks plaguy gruff. [Steps aside.]

Enter SIR ANTHONY.

Sir. Anth. No—I'll die sooner than forgive him.—*Die,* did I say? I'll live these fifty years to plague him.

him.—At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper.—An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy!—Who can he take after? This is my return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters!—for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty pounds a-year, besides his pay, ever since!—But I have done with him;—he's any body's son for me.—I never will see him more,—never—never—never—never.

Abs. Now for a penitential face.

Sir Anth. Fellow, get out of my way.

Abs. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

Sir Anth. I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

Abs. A sincere penitent.—I am come, Sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

Sir Anth. What's that?

Abs. I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

Sir Anth. Well, Sir?

Abs. I have been likewise weighing and balancing what you were pleased to mention concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

Sir Anth. Well, puppy?

Abs. Why then, Sir, the result of my reflections is—a resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

Sir Anth. Why now, you talk sense—absolute sense—I never heard any thing more sensible in my life.—Confound you; you shall be Jack again.

Abs. I am happy in the appellation.

Sir Anth. Why, then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you who the lady really is.—Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, prevented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for wonder and rapture—prepare.—What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

Abs. Languish? What, the Languishes of Worcester-shire?

L

Sir Anth.

Sir Anth. Worcester-shire! No. Did you never meet Mrs Malaprop and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

Abf. Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay—I think I do recollect something.—*Languish! Languish!* She squints, don't she?—A little red-haired girl.

Sir Anth. Squints!—A red-haired girl!—*Z*—ds! no.

Abf. Then I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

Sir Anth. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen?

Abf. As to that, Sir, I am quite indifferent.—If I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

Sir Anth. Nay, but Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! Not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then Jack, her lips!—O Jack, lips smiling at their own discretion; and if not smiling, more sweetly pouting; more lovely in fullness!

Abf. That's she indeed. Well done, old gentleman.

Sir Anth. Then, Jack, her neck.—O Jack! Jack!

Abf. And which is to be mine, Sir, the Niece or the Aunt?

Sir Anth. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you. When I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The Aunt, indeed!—Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched any thing old or ugly to gain an empire.

Abf. Not to please your father, Sir?

Sir Anth. To please my father!—*Z*—ds! not to please—O my father—Odds!—yes—yes; if my father indeed had desired—that's quite another matter—Tho' he wa's't the indulgent father that I am, Jack.

Abf. I dare say not, Sir.

Sir Anth.

Sir Anth. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful.

Abf. Sir, I repeat it; if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome; but, Sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something of a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind—now, without being very nice, I own I should rather choose a wife of mine to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back: and tho' one eye may be very agreeable, yet as the prejudice has always run in favour of two, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

Sir Anth. What a phlegmatic sot it is! Why, firrah, you're an Anchorite!—a vile insensible stock.—You a soldier!—You're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on!—Odds life! I've a great mind to marry the girl myself!

Abf. I am entirely at your disposal, Sir; if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the *Aunt*; or if you should change your mind, and take the old lady—'tis the same to me—I'll marry the *Niece*.

Sir Anth. Upon my word, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or——but, come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie—I'm sure it must—come, confess, Jack—you have been lying—ha'n't you? You have been playing the hypocrite, hey!—I'll never forgive you, if you ha'n't been lying and playing the hypocrite.

Abf. I'm sorry, Sir, that the respect and duty which I bear to you should be so mistaken.

Sir Anth. Hang your respect and duty! But, come along with me, I'll write a note to Mrs Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethian torch to you,—come along, I'll never forgive you, if you don't come back, stark mad with rapture and impatience—if you don't, egad, I'll marry the girl myself!

[*Exeunt.*
SCENE

L 2

Anth.

SCENE II. JULIA'S *Dressing-room.*FAULKLAND, *solus.*

Faulk. They told me Julia would return directly ; I wonder she is not yet come !—How mean does this captious, unsatisfied temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment ! Yet I know not that I indulge it in any other point :—but on this one subject, and to this one subject, whom I think I love beyond my life, I am ever ungraciously fretful, and madly capricious !—I am conscious of it—yet I cannot correct myself ! What tender honest joy sparkled in her eyes when we met !—How delicate was the warmth of her expressions !—I was ashamed to appear less happy—though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence prevented my proposed expostulations :—yet I must be satisfied that she has not been so *very* happy in my absence.—She is coming !—Yes !—I know the nimbleness of her tread, when she thinks her impatient. Faulkland counts the moments of her stay.

Enter JULIA.

Julia. I had not hop'd to see you again so soon.

Faulk. Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome—restrained as we were by the presence of a third person ?

Julia. O Faulkland, when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered something of coldness in your first salutation.

Faulk. 'Twas but your fancy, Julia.—I *was* rejoiced to see you—to see you in such health—Sure I had no cause for coldness ?

Julia. Nay then, I see you have taken something ill.—You must not conceal from me what it is.

Faulk. Well, then—shall I own to you that my joy at hearing of your health and your arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was somewhat damped by his dwelling much on the high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire—on your mirth—your singing—dancing, and I know not what !—For such is my temper, Julia !

tha

that I should regard every mirthful moment in your absence as a treason to constancy:—The mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

Julia. Must I never cease to tax my Faulkland with this teasing minute caprice?—Can the idle reports of a silly boor weigh in your breast against my tried affection?

Faulk. They have no weight with me, Julia: No, no—I am happy if you have been so—yet only say, that you did not sing with *mirth*—say that you *thought* of Faulkland in the dance.

Julia. I never can be happy in your absence.—If I wear a countenance of content, it is to shew that my mind holds no doubt of my Faulkland's truth.—If I seem'd sad—it were to make malice triumph; and say, that I had fixed my heart on one, who left me to lament his roving, and my own credulity.—Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you, when I say, that I have have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears.

Faulk. You were ever all goodness to me.—I am a brute, when I but admit a doubt of your constancy!

Julia. If ever without such cause from you, as I will not suppose possible, you find my affections veering but a point, may I become a proverbial scold for levity, and base ingratitude.

Faulk. Ah! Julia, that last word is grating to me. I would I had no title to your *gratitude*! Search your heart, Julia; perhaps what you have mistaken for love, is but the warm effusion of a too thankful heart!

Julia. For what quality must I love you?

Faulk. For no quality! To regard me for any quality of mind or understanding, were only to *esteem* me. And for person—I have often wish'd myself deformed, to be convinced that I owed no obligation *there* for any part of your affection.

Julia. Where Nature has bestowed a shew of nice attention in the features of a man, he should laugh at it, as misplaced. I have seen men, who in *this* vain article,

perhaps, might rank above you; but my heart never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

Faulk. Now this is not well from you, Julia.—I despise person in a man—yet, if you lov'd me as I wish, though I were an *Aethiop*, you'd think none so fair.

Julia. I see you are determined to be unkind—The contract which my poor father bound us in gives you more than a lover's privilege.

Faulk. Again, Julia, you raise ideas that feed and justify my doubts.—I would not have been more free—no—I am proud of my restraint.—Yet—yet—perhaps your high respect alone for this solemn compact has fettered your inclinations, which else had made a worthier choice.—How shall I be sure, had you remained unbound in thought and promise, that I should still have been the object of your persevering love?

Julia. Then try me now.—Let us be free as strangers as to what is past: my heart will not feel more liberty!

Faulk. There now! so hasty, Julia! so anxious to be free?—If your love for me were fixed and ardent, you would not lose your hold, even though I wish'd it!

Julia. O! you torture me to the heart! I cannot bear it.

Faulk. I do not mean to distress you.—If I lov'd you less, I should never give you an uneasy moment.—But hear me.—All my fretful doubts arise from this.—Women are not used to weigh, and separate the motives of their affections: The cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty, may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart.—I would not boast—yet let me say, that I have neither age, person, or character, to found dislike on;—my fortune such as few ladies could be charged with *indiscretion* in the match.—O Julia! when love receives such countenance from *prudence*, nice minds will be suspicious of its birth.

Julia. I know not whither your insinuations would tend:—But, as they seem pressing to insult me—I will spare you the regret of having done so.—I have given you no cause for this!

[Exit in tears.]

Faulk.

Faulk. In tears! stay, Julia: stay but for a moment.—The door is fastened!—Julia;—my soul—but for one moment: I hear her sobbing.—'Sdeath! what a brute am I to use her thus! Yet stay.—Aye—she is coming now:—how little resolution there is in woman!—how a few soft words can turn them!—No, faith! she is *not* coming either.—Why, Julia—my love—say but that you forgive me—come but to tell me that—now, this is being *too* resentful: stay! she is coming to—I thought she would—no *steadiness* in any thing! her going away must have been a mere trick then—she shan't see that I was hurt by it.—I'll affect indifference—(*hum a tune: then listens*)—No—Z—ds! she's *not* coming!—nor don't intend it, I suppose.—This is not *steadiness*, but *obstinacy*! Yet I deserve it.—What! after so long an absence, to quarrel with her tenderness!—'twas barbarous and unmanly!—I should be ashamed to see her now.—I'll wait till her just resentment is abated—and when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever! and be linked instead to some antique virago, whose gnawing passions, and long hoarded spleen, shall make me curse my folly half the day, and all the night. [*Exit*]

SCENE III. *Mrs MALAPROP's Lodgings.*

Mrs MALAPROP, with a letter in her hand, and

Captain ABSOLUTE.

Mrs Mal. Your being Sir Anthony's son, Captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; but from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

Abf. Permit me to say, madam, that as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement in this affair at present is the honour of being allied to Mrs Malaprop; of whose intellectual, accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

Mrs Mal.

Mrs Mal. Sir, you do me infinite honour!—I beg, Captain, you'll be seated.—(*Sit*)—Ah! few gentlemen, now-a-days, know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman! few think how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewoman!—Men have no sense now but for the worthless, flower of beauty!

Alf. It is but too true indeed, ma'am;—yet I fear our ladies should share the blame—they think our admiration of *beauty* so great, that *knowledge* in *them* would be superfluous. Thus, like garden trees, they seldom shew fruit, till time has robb'd them of the more specious blossom.—Few, like Mrs Malaprop and the orange tree, are rich in both at once!

Mrs Mal. Sir—you overpower me with good breeding—He is the very pine-apple of politeness! You are not ignorant, Captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eve's-dropping Ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows any thing of.

Alf. O, I have heard the silly affair before.—I'm not at all prejudiced against her on *that* account.

Mrs Mal. You are very good, and very considerate, Captain.—I am sure I have done every thing in my power since I exploded the affair! long ago I laid my positive conjunctions on her, never to think on the fellow again;—I have since laid Sir Anthony's proposition before her;—but, I am sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every particle that I enjoin her.

Alf. It must be very distressing, indeed, ma'am.

Mrs Mal. Oh! it gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree;—I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but, behold, this very day, I have interceded another letter from the fellow; I believe I have it in my pocket.

Alf. O the devil! my last note.

[*Aside.*]

Mrs Mal. Aye, here it is.

Alf. Aye, my note indeed! O the little traitress Lucy.

[*Aside.*]

Mrs Mal. There, perhaps, you may know the writing.

[*Gives him the letter.*]

Alf.

Abf. I think I have seen the hand before—yes I certainly must have seen this hand before:—

Mrs Mal. Nay, but read it, Captain.

Abf. (*Reads*) "*My soul's idol, my ador'd Lydia!*"—Very tender, indeed!

Mrs Mal. Tender! aye and prophane too, o' my conscience!

Abf. "*I am excessively alarmed at the intelligence you send me, the more so as my new rival*"—

Mrs Mal. That's you, Sir.

Abf. "*Has universally the character of being an accomplished gentleman, and a man of honour.*"—Well, that's handsome enough.

Mrs Mal. O, the fellow has some design in writing so.—

Abf. That he had, I'll answer for him, ma'am.

Mrs Mal. But go on, Sir,—you'll see presently.

Abf. "*As for the old weather-beaten sea-dragon who guards you*"—Who can he mean by that?

Mrs Mal. Me, Sir,—me—he means me there—what do you think now?—But go on a little further.

Abf. Impudent scoundrel!—"It shall go hard but I will elude her vigilance, as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity, which makes her dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand—"

Mrs Mal. There, Sir, an attack upon my language! what do you think of that?—an aspersion upon my parts of speech! was ever such a brute! Sure if I reprehend any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!

Abf. He deserves to be hang'd and quarter'd! let me see—"same ridiculous vanity"—

Mrs Mal. You need not read it again, Sir.

Abf. I beg pardon, Ma'am; "*does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration*"—an impudent coxcomb!—"so that I have a scheme to see you shortly with the old harridan's consent, and even to make her a go between in our interviews."—Was ever such assurance!

Mrs Mal.

Mrs Mal. Did you ever hear any thing like it?—he'll elude my vigilance, will he—yes, yes! ha! ha! he's very likely to enter these doors!—we'll try who can plot best!

Abf. So we will, Ma'am—so we will.—Ha! ha! ha! a conceited puppy, ha! ha! ha!—Well, but Mrs Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while I, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead.

Mrs Mal. I am delighted with the scheme, never was any thing better perpetrated!

Abf. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes now?—I should like to try her temper a little.

Mrs Mal. Why, I don't know—I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind.—There is a decorum in these matters.

Abf. O Lord! she won't mind me—only tell her Beverly—

Mrs Mal. Sir!

Abf. Gently, good tongue.

[*Aside.*]

Mrs Mal. What did you say of Beverly?

Abf. O, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverly who was below—she'd come down fast enough then—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs Mal. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves—besides you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to see her—ha! ha!—Let him if he can, I say again.—Lydia, come down here!—[*Calling*]—He'll make me a go-between in their interviews!—ha! ha! ha! Come down, I say, Lydia!—I don't wonder at your laughing, ha! ha! ha! his impudence is truly ridiculous.

Abf. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, Ma'am—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs Mal. The little huffey won't hear.—Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is—she shall know that
Captain

Captain Absolute is come to wait on her.—And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

Abf. As you please, Ma'am.

Mrs Mal. For the present, Captain, your servant—Ah! you've not done laughing yet, I see—*elude my vigilance!* yes, yes, ha! ha! ha! *[Exit.*

Abf. Ha! ha! ha! one would think now that I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security—but such is Lydia's caprice, that to undeceive were probably to lose her.—I'll see whether she knows me. *[Walks aside and seems engaged in looking at the pictures.*

Enter LYDIA.

Lydia. What a scene am I now to go through! surely nothing can be more dreadful than to be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's heart.—I have heard of girls persecuted as I am, who have appealed in behalf of their favoured lover to the generosity of his rival; suppose I were to try it—there stands the hated rival—an officer too!—but O how unlike my Beverly! I wonder he don't begin—truly he is a very negligent wooer!—quite at his ease, upon my word! I'll speak first.—Mr Absolute.

Abf. Ma'am.

[turns round.

Lydia. O heav'ns! Beverly!

Abf. Hush!—hush, my life!—softly! be not surprised!

Lydia. I am so astonished! and so terrified! and so overjoyed! for heaven's sake how came you here?

Abf. Briefly—I have deceived your aunt—I was informed that my new rival was to visit here this evening, and contriving to have kept him away, have passed myself on *her* for Captain Absolute.

Lydia. O, charming!—And she really takes you for young Absolute?

Abf. O, she's convinced of it.

Lydia. Ha! ha! ha! I can't forbear laughing to think how her sagacity is over-reached!

Abf. But we trifle with our precious moments—such another opportunity may not occur—then let me now conjure

conjure my kind, my condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and with a licensed warmth plead for my reward.

Lydia. Will you then, Beverly, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth?—that burden on the wings of love?

Abf. O come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness—Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia—for well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverly can repay.

Lydia. How persuasive are his words!—how charming will poverty be with him!

Abf. Ah! my soul, what a life will we then live? Love shall be our idol and support! we will worship him with a monastic strictness; abjuring all worldly toys, to center every thought and action there.—Proud of calamity, we will enjoy the wreck of wealth; while the surrounding gloom of adversity shall make the flame of our pure love show doubly bright.—By heav'ns! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with a prodigal hand, to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia to my bosom, and say, the world affords no smile to me—but here—[*Embracing her*]—If she holds out now, the devil is in it! [*Aside.*]

Lydia. Now could I fly with him to the Antipodes! but my persecution is not yet come to a crisis.

Enter MRS MALAPROP listening.

Mrs Mal. I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. [*Aside.*]

Abf. So pensive, Lydia!—is then your warmth abated?

Mrs Mal. Warmth abated!—so!—she has been in a passion, I suppose.

Lydia. No,—nor ever can while I have life.

Mrs Mal. An ill-temper'd little devil!—She'll be in a passion all her life—will she?

Lydia. Think not the idle threats of my ridiculous aunt can ever have any weight with me.

Mrs Mal. Very dutiful upon my word!

Lydia. Let her choice be Captain Absolute, but Beverly is mine.

Mrs Mal.

Mrs Mal. I am astonished at her assurance!—to his face—this is to his face!

Abf. Thus then let me enforce my suit. [*kneeling.*]

Mrs Mal. Aye—poor young man!—down on his knees entreating for pity!—I can contain no longer.—Why, thou vixen!—I have overheard you.

Abf. O confound her vigilance. [*Aside.*]

Mrs Mal. Captain *Absolute*—I know not how to apologize for her shocking rudeness.

Abf. So—all's safe, I find.—[*Aside*]—I have hopes, Madam, that time will bring the young lady——

Mrs Mal. O, there's nothing to be hoped for from her; she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile.

Lydia. Nay, madam, what do you charge me with now?

Mrs Mal. Why, thou unblushing rebel—didn't you tell this gentleman to his face, that you lov'd another better?—didn't you say you never would be his?

Lydia. No, Madam—I did not.

Mrs Mal. Good heav'ns! what assurance!—*Lydia*, *Lydia*, you ought to know that lying don't become a young woman!—Didn't you boast that *Beverly*—that stroller *Beverly*, possessed your heart?—Tell me that, I say.

Lydia. 'Tis true, Ma'am, and none but *Beverly*—

Mrs Mal. Hold;—hold, assurance!—you shall not be so rude.

Abf. Nay, pray *Mrs Malaprop*, don't stop the young lady's speech:—she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt *me* in the least, I assure you.

Mrs Mal. You are *too* good, Captain—*too* amiably patient—but come with me, Miss—let us see you again soon, Captain—remember what we have fixed.

Abf. I shall, Ma'am.

Mrs Mal. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

Lydia. May every blessing wait on my *Beverly*, my lov'd *Bew*——

Mrs Mal. Huffy! I'll choak the word in your throat!—come along—come along. [*Exeunt severally.*]

[*Absolute* kissing his hand to *Lydia*—*Mrs Malaprop* stopping her from speaking.

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SCENE

SCENE IV. ACRES' Lodgings.

ACRES and DAVID.

*ACRES, as just Dress'd.**Acres.* Indeed, David—do you think I become it so?*David.* You are quite another creature, believe me, master, by the mass! an' we've any luck, we shall see the Devon monkeyroney in all the print-shops in Bath!*Acres.* Dress *does* make a difference, David.*David.* 'Tis all in all, I think—difference! why, an' you were to go now to Clod-Hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you: Mr Butler wouldn't believe his own eyes, and Mrs Pickle would cry, "Lard preserve me!" our dairy-maid would come giggling to the door, and I warrant Dolly Tester, your honour's favourite, would blush like my waistcoat—Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there an't a dog in the house but would bark, and I question whether *Phillis* would wag a hair of her tail!*Acres.* Aye, David, there's nothing like polishing.*David.* So I says of your honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!*Acres.* But, David, has Mr *De la-Grace* been here? I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.*David.* I'll call again, Sir.*Acres.* Do—and see if there are any letters for me at the Post-Office.*David.* I will.—By the mass, I can't help looking at your head!—if I hadn't, been by at the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself! *[Exit.]**[Acres comes forward, practising a dancing step.]**Acres.* Sink, slide—coupee—Confound the first inventors of Cotillons! say I—they are as bad as algebra to us country gentlemen—I can walk a minuet easy enough when I am forced!—and I have been accounted a good slick in a country-dance.—Odds jiggs and tabers!—I never valued your cross-over to couple—figure in—right and left—and I'd foot it with either a Captain in the country!—but these outlandish heathen

Heathen Allemandes and Cotillons are quite beyond me—I shall never prosper at 'em, that's sure—mine are true-born English legs—they don't understand their curst French lingo!—their *Pas* this, and *Pas* that, and *Pas* t'other!—damn me! my feet don't like to be called Paws! no, 'tis certain I have most Antigallican toes!

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Here is Sir Lucius O'Trigger to wait on you, Sir.
Acres. Shew him in.

Enter SIR LUCIUS.

Sir Luc. Mr Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

Acres. My dear Sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

Sir Luc. Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath?

Acres. Faith! I have followed Cupid's Jack-a-Lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last.—In short, I have been very ill-used, Sir Lucius.—I don't chuse to mention names, but look on me as on a very ill-used gentleman.

Sir Luc. Pray what is the case?—I ask no names.

Acres. Mark me, Sir Lucius, I fell as deep as need be in love with a young lady—her friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—send word of my arrival; and receive answer, that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of.—This, Sir Lucius, I call being ill-used.

Sir Luc. Very ill, upon my conscience.—Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

Acres. Why, there's the matter; she has another lover, one *Beverly*, who, I am told, is now in Bath—Odds scandals and lies! he must be at the bottom of it.

Sir Luc. A rival in the case, is there?—and you think he has supplanted you unfairly.

Acres. Unfairly! to be sure he has.—He never could have done it fairly.

Sir Luc. Then sure you know what is to be done!

Acres. Not I, upon my soul.

Sir Luc. We wear no swords here, but you understand me?

Acres. What! fight him!

M 2

Sir Luc.

Sir Luc. Aye, to be sure; what can I mean else?

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir Luc. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world.—Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another than to fall in love with the same woman? O, by soul, it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

Acres. Breach of friendship! aye, aye; but I have no acquaintance with this man.—I never saw him in my life.

Sir Luc. That's no argument at all—he has the less right then to take such a liberty.

Acres. 'Gad that's true—I grow full of anger, Sir Lucius!—I fire apace! Odds hilts and blades! I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right of my side?

Sir Luc. What the devil signifies *right*, when your honour is concerned? Do you think, *Achilles* or my little *Alexander the Great* ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul, they drew their broad-swords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

Acres. Your words are as a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching!—I certainly do feel a kind of valour rising as it were—a kind of courage, as I may say—Odds flints and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

Sir Luc. Ah! my little friend! if I had *Blunderbuss-Hall* here—I could shew you a range of ancestry, in the O'Trigger line, that would furnish the new room; every one of whom have killed his man!—For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipped through my fingers, I thank heav'n our honour and the family pictures are as fresh as ever.

Acres. O, Sir Lucius! I have had ancestors too!—every man of 'em colonel or captain in the militia!—Odds balls and barrels! say no more—I'm brac'd for it.—The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast!—Z—ds! as the man in the play says, “I could do such deeds—”

Sir Luc.

Sir Luc. Come, come, there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly.

Acres. I must be in a passion, Sir Lucius—I must be in a rage—Dear Sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if you love me—Come, here's pen and paper.—*(Sits down to write.)*—I would the ink were red!—Indite, I say indite!—How shall I begin? Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however.

Sir Luc. Pray compose yourself.

Acres. Come—now, shall I begin with an oath! Do, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme.

Sir Luc. Pho! Pho! do the thing decently, and like a christian. Begin now—"Sir"—

Acres. That's too civil by half.

Sir Luc. "To prevent the confusion that might arise"

Acres. Well—

Sir Luc. "From our both addressing the same lady."

Acres. Aye—there's the reason—"same lady"—Well—

Sir Luc. "I shall expect the honour of your company"—

Acres. Z—ds! I'm not asking him to dinner.

Sir Luc. Pray be easy.

Acres. Well then, "honour of your company."

Sir Luc. "To settle our pretensions"

Acres. Well—

Sir Luc. Let me see, aye, *King's Mead-fields* will do—"in *King's Mead-fields*."

Acres. So that's done.—Well, I'll fold it up presently; my own crest—a hand and dagger shall be the seal.

Sir Luc. You see now this little explanation will put a stop at once to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

Acres. Aye, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

Sir Luc. Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time.—Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening if you can; then let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

Acres. Very true.

Sir Luc. So I shall see nothing more of you unless it be by letter, till the evening.—I would do myself the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my hands. There is a gay captain here, who put a jest on me lately, at the expence of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman, to call him out.

Acres. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life! I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson.

Sir Luc. I shall be very proud of instructing you.—Well for the present—but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do every thing in a mild and agreeable manner.—Let your courage be as keen, but at the same time as polished as your sword.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT. IV.

SCENE I. ACRES'S Lodgings.

ACRES and DAVID.

David. **T**HEN, by the Mafs, Sir! I would do no such thing—ne'er a Sir Lucius O'I'rigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say, when she hears o't!

Acres. Ah! David, if you had heard Sir Lucius!—Odds sparks and flames! he would have rous'd your valour.

David. Not he, indeed. I hates such blood-thirsty cormorants. Look'ye, master, if you'd wanted a bout at boxing, quarter-staff, or short-staff, I should never be the man to bid you cry off: But for your curst sharps and snaps, I never knew any good come of 'em.

Acres. But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very carefull of my honour.

David. Aye, by the mafs! and I would be very carefull of it; and I think in return my honour could'n't do less than be very carefull of me.

Acres.

Acres. Odds-blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

David. I say then it would be but civil in *honour* never to risk the loss of a *gentleman*.—Look'ee, master, this *honour* seems to me to be a marvellous false friend: aye, truly, a very courtier-like servant.—Put the case, I was gentleman (which, thank God, no one can say of me;) well—my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance,—So—we fight. (Pleasant enough that) Poh!—I kill him—(the more's my luck.) Now, pray who gets the profit of it?—Why, my *honour*—But put the case that he kills me!—by the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy.

Acres. No, David—in that case!—Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave.

David. Now, that's just the place where I could make a shift to do without it.

Acres. Z—ds! David you are a coward!—It doesn't become my valour to listen to you.—What! shall I disgrace my ancestors?—Think of that, David—think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors!

David. Under favour, the surest way of not disgracing them is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Look'ee now, master, to go to them in such haste—with an ounce of lead in your brains—I should think might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should chuse to have a visiting acquaintance with.

Acres. But, David, now, you don't think there is such very, very, *very* great danger, hey?—Odds' life! people often fight without any mischief done!

David. By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you!—Oons! here to meet some lion-headed fellow, I warrant, with his d—n'd double-barrell'd swords, and cut-and-thrust pistols! Lord bless us! it makes me tremble to think o't—Those be such desperate bloody-minded weapons! Well, I never could abide 'em!—from a child I never could fancy 'em!—I suppose there
a'n't

Acres.

a'n't been so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

Acres. Z—ds! I *won't* be afraid—Odds fire and fury! you shan't make me afraid.—Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend Jack Absolute to carry it for me.

David. Ave. i'the name of mischief, let *him* be the messenger.—For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the mass! it don't look like another letter!—It is, as I may say, a designing and malicious-looking letter!—and I warrant firells of gunpowder like a soldier's pouch!—Oons! wouldn't swear it mayn't go off!

Acres. Out, you poltroon!—you ha'n't the valour of a grass-hopper.

David. Well, I say no more—'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod Hall!—but I ha' done.—How Phyllis will howl when she hears of it!—Aye, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after!—And I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born. *(Whimpering.)*

Acres. It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Captain Absolute, Sir.

Acres. O! shew him up. *[Exit Servant.]*

David. Well, Heaven send we be all alive this time to-morrow.

Acres. What's that!—Don't provoke me, David!

David. Good bye, Master. *(Whimpering.)*

Acres. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly croaking raven. *[Exit David.]*

Enter ABSOLUTE.

Abf. What's the matter, Bob?

Acres. A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead!—If I hadn't the valour of St George and the dragon to boot—

Abf. But what do you want with me, Bob?

Acres. O!—There— *(Gives him the challenge.)*

Abf.

Abf. "To Ensign Beverley." So—what's going on now!

[*Afide.*

Well, what's this?

Acres. A challenge!

Abf. Indeed!—Why, you won't fight him; will you, Bob?

Acres. 'Egad but I will, Jack.—Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage—and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

Abf. But what have I to do with this?

Acres. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

Abf. Well, give it to me, and trust me he gets it.

Acres. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

Abf. Not in the least—I beg you won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

Acres. You are very kind.—What it is to have a friend!—You couldn't be my second—could you, Jack?

Abf. Why no, Bob—not in *this* affair—it would not be quite so proper.

Acres. Well, then, I must get my friend Sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack.

Abf. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Sir Anthony Absolute is below, inquiring for the Captain.

Abf. I'll come instantly.—Well, my little hero, success attend you. (*Going.*

Acres. Stay—stay, Jack.—If Beverly should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow—will you, Jack?

Abf. To be sure I shall.—I'll say you are a determined dog—hey, Bob!

Acres. Aye, do, do—and if that frightens him, 'egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a-week; will you, Jack?

Abf.

Abf. I will, I will; I'll say you are called in the country "*Fighting Bob*."

Acres. Right, right—'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life if I clear my honour.

Abf. No!—that's very kind of you.

Acres. Why, you don't wish me to kill him—do you, Jack?

Abf. No, upon my soul, I do not.—But a devil of a fellow, hey? (*Going.*)

Acres. True, true—but stay—stay, Jack—you may add, that you never saw me in such a rage before—a most devouring rage!

Abf. I will, I will.

Acres. Remember, Jack—a determined dog!

Abf. Aye, aye, "*Fighting Bob*."

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II. MRS MALAPROP'S Lodgings.

MRS MALAPROP and LYDIA.

Mrs Mal. Why, thou perverse one!—tell me what you can object to him?—Isn't he a handsome man?—tell me that.—A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

Lydia. She little thinks whom she is praising! (*Aside.*)—So is Beverly, ma'am.

Mrs Mal. No caparisons, Miss, if you please.—Caparisons don't become a young woman.—No! Captain Absolute is indeed a fine gentleman!

Lydia. Aye, the Captain Absolute you have seen.

[*Aside.*]

Mrs Mal. Then he's *so* well bred;—*so* full of alacrity and adulation!—and has *so much* to say for himself:—in such good language too!—His physiognomy so grammatical!—Then his presence so noble!—I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play:—"Hesperian curls—the front of *Job* himself!—an eye, like *March*, to threaten at command!—a Station, like *Harry Mercury*, new—" Something about

about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude struck me directly.

Lydia. How enraged she'll be presently when she discovers her mistake! [*Aside.*]

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Sir Anthony and Captain Absolute are below, Ma'am.

Mrs Mal. Shew them up here. [*Exit Servant.*]
Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving as becomes a young woman.—Shew your good breeding, at least, though you have forgot your duty.

Lydia. Madam, I have told you my resolution!—I shall not only give him no encouragement, but I won't even speak to, or look at him.

[*Fling herself into a chair, with her face from the door.*]

Enter SIR ANTHONY and ABSOLUTE.

Sir Anth. Here we are, Mrs Malaprop; come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty,—and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow.—I don't know what's the matter; but if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip.

Mrs Mal. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair.—I am ashamed for the cause! Lydia, Lydia, rise I beseech you!—pay your respects!

[*Aside to her.*]

Sir Anth. I hope, Madam, that Miss Languish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and my alliance—Now, Jack, speak to her.

[*Aside to him.*]

Abf. What the d—! shall I do! [*Aside.*—You see, Sir, she won't even look at me, whilst you are here.—I knew she wouldn't!—I told you so.—Let me intreat you, Sir, to leave us together!

(Absolute seems to expostulate with his father.)

Lydia. (*Aside*), I wonder I ha'n't heard my aunt exclaim yet! sure she can't have look'd at him!—perhaps their regimentals are alike, and she is something blind.

Sir Anth. I say, Sir, I won't stir a foot yet.

Mrs Mal,

Mrs Mal. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my influence over my niece is very small.—Turn round, Lydia, I blush for you! [*Aside to her.*]

Sir Anth. May I not flatter myself, that Miss Languish will assign what cause for dislike she can have to my son!—Why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy,—speak! [*Aside to him.*]

Mrs Mal. It is impossible, Sir Anthony, she can have any.—She will not say she has.—Answer, huffy! why don't you answer? [*Aside to her.*]

Sir Anth. Then, Madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness.—Z—ds! firrah! why don't you speak? [*Aside to him.*]

Lydia. [*Aside*] I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself.—How strangely blind my aunt must be!

Abs. Hem! hem! Madam—hem! [*Absolute attempts to speak, then turns to Sir Anthony*]—Faith, Sir, I am so confounded!—and so—so—confused!—I told you I should be so, Sir,—I knew it.—The—the tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

Sir Anth. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it?—Go up, and speak to her directly!

[*Absolute makes signs to Mrs Malaprop to leave them together.*]

Mrs Mal. Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together?—Ah you stubborn little vixen! [*Aside to her.*]

Sir Anth. Not yet, Ma'am, not yet!—what the d—l are you at! unlock your jaws, firrah, or—

[*Aside to him.*]

(*ABSOLUTE draws near LYDIA.*)

Abs. Now heav'n send she may be too sullen to look round!—I must disguise my voice. [*Aside.*]

(*Speaks in a low hoarse tone.*)

—Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love?—Will not—

Sir Anth. What the d—l ails the fellow? Why don't you speak out?—not stand croaking like a frog in a quinssey!

Abs.

Abf. The—the—excess of my awe, and my—my—
my modesty, quite choak me!

Sir Anth. Ah! your *modesty* again!—I'll tell you
what, Jack; if you don't speak out directly, and glibly
too, I shall be in such a rage!—Mrs Malaprop, I wish
the lady would favour us with something more than
a side-front,

(Mrs Malaprop seems to chide Lydia.

Abf. So!—all will out, I see!

Goes up to Lydia, speaks softly.

Be not surprised, my Lydia, suppress all surprise at
present.

Lydia. [*Aside.*] Heav'ns! 'tis Beverly's voice!—
Sure he can't have imposed on Sir Anthony too!

[*Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*

Is this possible!—my Beverly!—how can this be?
—my Beverly?

Abf. Ah! 'tis all over.

(*Aside.*

Sir Anth. Beverly!—the devil—Beverly!—What
can the girl mean?—This is my son, Jack Absolute.

Mrs Mal. For shame, hussy! for shame!—your
head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always
in your eyes!—beg Captain Absolute's pardon, directly.

Lydia. I see no Captain Absolute, but my lov'd
Beverly!

Sir Anth. Z—ds! the girl's mad!—her brain's turn'd
by reading!

Mrs Mal. O' my conscience, I believe so!—what
do you mean by Beverly, hussy?—You saw Captain
Absolute before to-day; there he is, your husband that
shall be.

Lydia. With all my soul, ma'am—when I refuse my
Beverly—

Sir Anth. O! she's as mad as Bedlam!—or has this
fellow been playing us a rogue's trick!—Come here,
sirrah, who the d—l are you?

Abf. Faith, Sir, I am not quite clear myself; but
I'll endeavour to recollect.

Sir Anth. Are you my son or not?—answer for your
mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

N

Mrs Mal.

Abf.

Mrs Mal. Aye, Sir, who are you? O mercy! I begin to suspect!—

Abf. Ye powers of Impudence, befriend me! (*aside*) Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself to be *your's* also, I hope my duty has always shewn.—Mrs Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer—and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew.—I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful *Beverly*, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assum'd that name, and a station, which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

Lydia. So,—there will be no elopement after all?
[*Sullenly.*]

Sir Anth. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! to do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Abf. O, you flatter me, Sir,—you compliment—'tis my *modesty* you know, Sir—my *modesty* that has stood in my way.

Sir Anth. Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however!—I'm glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog—I am—So this was your *penitence*, your *duty*, and *obedience*!—I thought it was d—n'd sudden!—You *never heard their names before*, not you!—*What*, the *LANGUISHES* of Worcestershire, hey?—*if you could please me in the affair, 'twas all you desired!*—Ah! you dissembling villain!—*What!* (*pointing to Lydia*) *she squints, don't she?*—*a little red haired girl!*—hey?—Why you hypocritical young rascal—I wonder you a'n't ashamed to hold up your head!

Abf. 'Tis with difficulty, Sir—I am confus'd—very much confus'd, as you may perceive.

Mrs Mal. O lud! Sir Anthony!—a new light breaks in upon me!—hey!—how! what! Captain, did you write the letters then?—What!—am I to thank you for the elegant compilation of "*an old weather-beaten she-dragon*"—hey?—O mercy!—was it you that reflected on my parts of speech?

Abf.

Abf. Dear Sir, my modesty will be overpower'd at last, if you don't assist me.—I shall certainly not be able to stand it.

Sir Anth. Come, come, Mrs Malaprop, we must forget and forgive;—odd's life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart to be so good humour'd! and so gallant!—hey! Mrs Malaprop?

Mrs Mal. Well, Sir Anthony, since *you* desire it, we will not anticipate the past;—so mind, young people—our retrospection will now be all to the future.

Sir Anth. Come, we must leave them together; Mrs Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant!—Jack—is'n't the cheek as I said,—hey? Come, Mrs Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—their's is the time of life for happiness!—"Youth's the season made for joy"—(sings)—hey!—Odd's life! I'm in such spirits,—I don't know what I could not do!—Permit me, Ma'am—[*gives his hand to Mrs Malaprop.*] (sings) Tol-de-rol—'gad I should like to have a little fooling myself—Tol-de-rol! de-rol! [*Exit singing, and handing Mrs Malaprop.*]

(Lydia sits sullenly in her chair.)

Abf. So much thought bodes no good (*aside*)—So grave, Lydia?

Lydia. Sir?

Abf. So!—egad! I thought as much!—that d—n'd monosyllable has froze me! (*aside*)—What, Lydia, now that we are happy in our friends consent, as in our mutual vows——

Lydia. Friends consent, indeed! (*peevishly.*)

Abf. Come, come, we must lay aside some of our romance—a little *wealth* and *comfort* may be endured after all. And for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as——

Lydia. Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

Abf. Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the licence, and——

Lydia. The licence!—I hate licence!

Abf. O, my love! be not so unkind!—thus let me intreat——

(*Kneeling.*
Lydia.

Lydia. Psha!—what signifies kneeling, when you know I *must* have you.

Abf. (Rising) Nay, Madam, there shall be no restraint upon your inclinations, I promise you.—If I have lost your heart,—I resign the rest.—'Gad I *must* try what a little *spirit* will do. (*Aside.*)

Lydia. [Rising] Then, Sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud.—What, you have been treating *me* like a child!—humouring my romance! and laughing, I suppose, at your success!

Abf. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me—only hear——

Lydia. So while I fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flatter'd myself that I should outwit and incense them all—behold my hopes are to be crush'd at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation—am I myself the only dupe at last! [*Walking about in a heat.*—But here, Sir, here is the picture—*Beverley's* picture! (*taking a miniature from her bosom*) which I have worn, night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties!—There, Sir, (*flings it to him*) and be assured I throw the original from my heart as easily.

Abf. Nay, nay, Ma'am, we will not differ as to that—Here, (*taking out a picture*) here is Miss Lydia Languish.—What a difference!—aye, *there* is the heav'nly assenting smile, that first gave soul and spirits to my hopes!—those are the lips which seal'd a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar!—and there the half-resentful blush, that *would* have check'd the ardour of my thanks—Well, all that's past!—all over indeed!—There, Madam—in beauty, that is not equal to you, but in my mind it's merit over the original, in being still the same, is such—that—I cannot find in my heart to part with it. [*Puts it up again.*]

Lydia. (Softening) 'Tis your own doing, Sir—I, I, I suppose you are perfectly satisfied.

Abf. O, most certainly—sure, now, this is much better than being in love!—ha! ha! ha!—there's some spirit in *this*!—What signifies breaking some scores of

of solemn promises :—all that's of no consequence you know.—To be sure people will say, that Miss didn't know her own mind—but never mind that :—or, perhaps, they may be ill-natured enough to hint, that the gentleman grew tired of the lady and forsook her—but don't let that fret you.

Lydia. There's no bearing his insolence.

[*Bursts into tears.*]

Enter Mrs MALAPROP and SIR ANTHONY.

Mrs Mal. (*Entering*) Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing a while.

Lydia. This is worse than your treachery and deceit, you base ingrate.

[*Sobbing.*]

Sir Anth. What the devil's the matter now !—Z—ds ! *Mrs Malaprop*, this is the *oddest* billing and cooing I ever heard !—but what the deuce is the meaning of it ?—I'm quite astonish'd !

Alf. Ask the lady, Sir.

Mrs Mal. O, mercy !—I'm quite analys'd for my part !—why, *Lydia*, what is the reason of this ?

Lydia. Ask the gentleman, Ma'am.

Sir Anth. Z—ds ! I shall be in a phrenzy !—why Jack, you are not come out to be any one else, are you ?

Mrs Mal. Aye, Sir, there's no more trick, is there ?—you are not like Cerberus, *three* gentlemen at once, are you.

Alf. You'll not let me speak—I say the lady can account for this much better than I can.

Lydia. Ma'am, you once commanded me never to think of *Beverly* again—there is the man—I now obey you :—for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever.

[*Exit Lydia.*]

Mrs Mal. O mercy ! and miracles ! what a turn here is—why sure, Captain you haven't behaved disrespectfully to my niece.

Sir Anth. Ha ! ha ! ha !—ha ! ha ! ha !—now I see it—Ha ! ha ! ha !—now I see it—you have been too lively, Jack.

Alf. Nay, Sir, upon my word—

Sir Anth. Come, no lying, Jack—I'm sure 'twas so.

N 3

Mrs Mal.

Mrs Mal. O Lud, Sir Anthony!—O fie, Captain!

Abf. Upon my soul, Ma'am—

Sir Anth. Come, no excuses, Jack;—why, your father, you rogue, was so before you:—the blood of the Absolutes was always impatient.—Ha! ha! ha! poor little Lydia!—why, you've frighten'd her, you dog, you have.

Abf. By all that's good, Sir—

Sir Anth. Z—ds! say no more, I tell you.—Mrs. Malaprop shall make your peace.—You must make his peace, Mrs. Malaprop:—you must tell her 'tis Jack's way—tell her 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of our family!—Come, away, Jack, ha! ha! ha! Mrs. Malaprop—a young villain! [*Pushes him out.*]

Mrs Mal. O Sir Anthony!—O fie, Captain!

SCENE IV. *The North Parade.*

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir Luc. I wonder where this Captain Absolute hides himself.—Upon my conscience!—these officers are always in one's way in love affairs:—I remember I might have married Lady Dorothy Carmine, if it had not been for a little rogue of a Major, who ran away with her before she could get a sight of me!—And I wonder too what it is the ladies can see in them to be so fond of them.—unless it be a touch of the old serpent in 'em, that makes the little creatures be caught, like vipers, with a bit of red cloth.—Hah!—isn't this the Captain coming?—saith it is!—There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow, that is mighty provoking! Who the devil is he talking to?

[*Steps aside.*]

Enter ABSOLUTE.

Abf. To what fine purpose I have been plotting! a noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul!—a little gypsey!—I did not think her romance could have made her so d—n'd absurd either.—'Sdeath, I never was in a worse humour in my life!—I could cut
my

my own throat, or any other person's, with the greatest pleasure in the world.

Sir Luc. O, faith! I'm in the luck of it.—I never could have found him in a sweeter temper for my purpose—to be sure I'm just come in the nick; now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteelly.

(*Sir Lucius goes up to Absolute.*)
—With regard to that matter, Captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Abf. Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle-disputant:—because, Sir, I happen'd just now to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir Luc. That's no reason—For give me leave to tell you, a man may *think* an untruth as well as *speak* one.

Abf. Very true. Sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

Sir Luc. Then, Sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

Abf. Hark'ee, Sir Lucius,—if I had not before known you to be a gentleman, upon my soul, I should not have discovered it at this interview:—for what you drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive.

Sir Luc. I humbly thank you, Sir, for the quickness of your apprehension.

[*Bowing.*]

—You have nam'd the very thing I would be at.

Abf. Very well, Sir—I shall certainly not baulk your inclinations:—but I should be glad you would please to explain your motives.

Sir Luc. Pray, Sir, be easy—the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it stands—we should only spoil it, by trying to explain it.—However, your memory is very short—or you could not have forgot an affront you pass'd on me within this last week.—So, no more, but name your time and place.

Abf. Well, Sir, since you are so bent on it, the sooner the better;—let it be this evening—here by the Spring Gardens.—We shall scarcely be interrupted.

Sir Luc.

Sir Luc. Faith! that same interruption in affairs of this nature shews very great ill breeding—I don't know what's the reason, but in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother, that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness.—However, if it's the same to you, Captain, I should take it as a particular kindness, if you'd let us meet in King's Mead Fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may dispatch both matters at once.

Abf. 'Tis the same to me exactly.—A little after six, then, we will discuss this matter more seriously.

Sir Luc. If you please, Sir, there will be very pretty small-sword light, tho' it won't do for a long shot.—So that matter's settled! and my mind's at ease.

[Exit Sir Lucius.

Enter FAULKLAND, meeting ABSOLUTE.

Abf. Well met.—I was going to look for you.—O, Faulkland! all the Dæmons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vex'd, that if I had not the prospect of a resource in being knock'd o'the head by and by, I should scarce have spirits to tell you the cause.

Faulk. What can you mean?—Has Lydia chang'd her mind?—I should have thought her duty and inclination would now have pointed to the same object.

Abf. Aye, just as the eyes of a person who squints:—when her love eye was fix'd on me—t'other—her eye of duty, was finely obliqued:—but when duty bid her point that the same way—off t'other turn'd on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

Faulk. But what's the resource you—

Abf. O, to wind up the whole, a good natured Irishman here has (*mimicking Sir Lucius*) begg'd leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat—and I mean to indulge him—that's all.

Faulk. Prithce, be serious.

Abf. 'Tis fact, upon my soul.—Sir Lucius O'Trigger—you know him by sight—for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet

meet him this evening at six o'clock :—'tis on that account I wished to see you—you must go with me.

Faulk. Nay, there must be some mistake, sure.—Sir Lucius shall explain himself—and I dare say matters may be accommodated :—but this evening, did you say ? —I wish it had been any other time.

Abf. Why ?—there will be light enough :—there will be light enough :—there will (as Sir Lucius says) “be very pretty small-sword light, tho’ it will not do for a long shot.”—Confound his long shots !

Faulk. But I am myself a good deal ruffled, by a difference I have had with Julia—my vile tormenting temper has made me treat her so cruelly, that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled.

Abf. By Heav’n, Faulkland, you don’t deserve her.

Enter servant, gives FAULKLAND a letter.

Faulk. O Jack ! this is from Julia—I dread to open it—I fear it may be to take a last leave—perhaps to bid me return her letters—and restore——O ! how I suffer for my folly !

Abf. Here—let me see.

[Takes the letter and opens it.]

Aye, a final sentence, indeed !—’tis all over with you, faith !

Faulk. Nay, Jack—don’t keep me in suspense.

Abf. Hear then.—“As I am convinced that my dear Faulkland’s own reflections have already upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I will not add a word on the subject.—I wish to speak with you as soon as possible.—Yours ever and truly. Julia.”—There’s stubbornness and resentment for you ! *[Gives him the letter.]* Why, man, you don’t seem one whit the happier at this.

Faulk. O yes, I am—but—but——

Abf. Confound your buts.—You never hear any thing that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately d—n it with a but.

Faulk. Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own honestly—don’t you think there is something forward—something indelicate in this haste to forgive ?—Women should never sue for reconciliation :—that should always come from us.—They should retain their coldness till

would

would to kindness—and the *pardon*, like their *love*, should “not unsought be won.”

Abs. I have no patience to listen to you:—thou’rt incorrigible!—so say no more on the subject.—I must go to settle a few matters—let me see you before six—remember—at my lodgings.—A poor industrious devil like me, who have toil’d, and drudg’d and plotted to gain my ends, and am at last disappointed by other people’s folly—may in pity be allowed to swear and grumble a little;—but a captious sceptic in love,—a slave to fretfulness and whim—who has no difficulties but of his own creating—is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion! [Exit Absolute.

Faulk. I feel his reproaches:—yet I would not change this too exquisite nicety, for the gross content with which he tramples on the thorns of love.—His engaging me in this duel, has started an idea in my head, which I will instantly pursue.—I’ll use it as the touchstone of Julia’s sincerity and disinterestedness—if her love prove pure and sterling ore—my name will rest on it with honour!—and once I’ve stamp’d it there, I lay aside my doubts for ever:—but if the dross of selfishness, the alloy of pride predominate—’twill be best to leave her as a toy for some less cautious fool to sigh for. [Exit Faulkland.

ACT V.

SCENE I. Julia’s Dressing-room.

JULIA sola.

—**H**OW this message has alarmed me! what dreadful accident can he mean? why such charge to be alone?—O Faulkland!—how many unhappy moments!—how many tears have you cost me!

Enter FAULKLAND.

Julia. What means this?—why this caution, Faulkland?

Faulk. Alas! Julia, I am come to take a long farewell. *Julia.*

Julia. Heav'ns! what do you mean?

Faulk. You see before you a wretch, whose life is forfeited.—Nay, start not!—the infirmity of my temper has drawn all this misery on me.—I left you fretful and passionate—an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel—the event is, that I must fly this kingdom instantly.—O Julia, had I been so fortunate as to have call'd you mine entirely, before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment!

Julia. My soul is oppress'd with sorrow at the nature of your misfortune: had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought that I could now chase from your bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love.—My heart has long known no other guardian—I now trust my person to your honour—we will fly together—When safe from pursuit, my father's will may be fulfilled—and I receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a Cherub's hand, shall smoothe the brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

Faulk. O Julia! I am a bankrupt in gratitude! but the time is so pressing, it calls on you for so hasty a resolution.—Would you not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forego, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you beside his solitary love?

Julia. I ask not a moment.—No, Faulkland, I have lov'd you for yourself: and if I now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to an act of love.—But let us not linger.—Perhaps this delay——

Faulk. 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark.—Yet am I griev'd to think what numberless distresses will press heavy on your gentle disposition!

Julia.

Julia. Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by this unhappy act.—I know not whether 'tis so—but sure that alone can never make us unhappy.—The little I have will be sufficient to support us; and exile never should be splendid.

Faulk. Aye, but in such an abject state of life, my wounded pride perhaps may increase the natural fretfulness of my temper, till I become a rude, morose companion, beyond your patience to endure. Perhaps the recollection of a deed my conscience cannot justify, may haunt me in such gloomy and unsocial fits, that I shall hate the tenderness that would relieve me, break from your arms, and quarrel with your fondness!

Julia. If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit to watch over and console you:—One who, by bearing *your* infirmities with gentleness and resignation, may teach you *so* to bear the evils of your fortune.

Faulk. Julia, I have proved you to the quick! and with this useless device I throw away all my doubts. How shall I plead to be forgiven this last unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

Julia. Has no such disaster happened as you related?

Faulk. I am ashamed to own that it was all pretended; yet in pity, Julia, do not kill me with resenting a fault which never can be repeated: But sealing, this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of heaven, receive my future guide and monitor, and expiate my past folly, by years of tender adoration.

Julia. Hold, Faulkland!—that you are free from a crime, which I before fear'd to name, heaven knows how sincerely I rejoice!—These are tears of thankfulness for that! But that your cruel doubts should have urged you to an imposition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang, more keen than I can express!

Faulk. By heav'ns! Julia——

Julia. Yet hear me.——My father lov'd you, Faulkland! and you preserv'd the life that tender parent gave me; in his presence I pledged my hand——
joyfully

joyfully pledged it—where before I had given my heart. When, soon after, I lost that parent, it seem'd to me that Providence had, in Faulkland, shewn me whither to transfer, without a pause, my grateful duty, as well as my affection: Hence I have been content to bear from you what pride and delicacy would have forbid me from another.—I will not upbraid you, by repeating how you have trifled with my sincerity.—

Faulk. I confess it all! yet hear—

Julia. After such a year of trial—I might have flattered myself that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel as unnecessary! I now see it is not in your nature to be content, or confident in love. With this conviction—I never will be yours. While I had hopes that my persevering attention, and unrepublishing kindness, might in time reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gain'd a dearer influence over you; but I will not furnish you with a licensed power to keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expence of one, who never would contend with you.

Faulk. Nay, but Julia, by my soul and honour, if after this—

Julia. But one word more.—As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another.—I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity; and the dearest blessing I can ask of heaven to send you, will be to charm from you that unhappy temper, which alone has prevented the performance of our solemn engagement.—All I request of you is, that you will yourself reflect upon this infirmity, and when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of—let it not be your *least* regret, that it lost you the love of one—who would have follow'd you in beggary through the world! [Exit.]

Faulk. She's gone!—for ever!—There was an awful resolution in her manner, that rivetted me to my place—O fool!—dolt!—barbarian!—Curst as I am, with more imperfections than my fellow-wretches, kind fortune sent a heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side!—I must

O

now

now hasten to my appointment.—Well, my mind is turned for such a scene.—I shall wish only to become a principal in it, and reverse the tale my cursed folly put me upon forging here.—O love!—tormentor!—fiend!—whose influence, like the moon's, acting on men of dull souls, make idiots of them, but meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges sensibility to madness! [Exit.

Enter MAID and LYDIA.

Maid. My mistress, ma'am, I know, was here just now—perhaps she is only in the next room. [Exit Maid.

Lydia. Heigh ho!—Though he has used me so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe one lecture from my grave cousin will make me recal him.

Enter JULIA.

Lydia. O, Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation.—Lud! child, what's the matter with you!—You have been crying!—I'll be hanged, if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you!

Julia. You mistake the cause of my uneasiness!—Something *has* flurried me a little.—Nothing that you can guess at.—I would not accuse Faulkland to a sister! [Aside.

Lydia. Ah! whatever vexations you may have, I can assure you mine surpass them.—You know who Beverly proves to be?

Julia. I will now own to you, Lydia, that Mr Faulkland had before inform'd me of the whole affair. Had young Absolute been the person you took him for, I should not have accepted your confidence on the subject, without a serious endeavour to counteract your caprice.

Lydia. So, then, I see I have been deceived by every one!—but I don't care—I'll never have him.

Julia. Nay, Lydia—

Lydia. Why, is it not provoking? when I thought we were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself made a mere Smithfield bargain of at last—There, had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements!—so becoming a disguise!—so amiable a ladder

ladder of ropes!—conscious moon—four horses—Scotch parson—with such surprise to Mrs Malaprop—and such paragraphs in the newspapers!—O, I shall die of disappointment.

Julia. I don't wonder at it.

Lydia. Now—sad reverse!—what have I to expect, but, after a flimsy preparation with a bishop's licence, and my aunt's blessing, to go simpering up to the altar; or perhaps be cried three times in a country-church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask the consent of every butcher in the parish to join John Absolute and Lydia Languish, spinster! O, that I should live to hear myself called spinster!

Julia. Melancholy indeed!

Lydia. How mortifying, to remember the dear delicious shifts I used to be put to, to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow!—How often have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden, stuck like a dripping statue!—There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough so pathetically! he shivering with cold, and I with apprehension! and while the freezing blast numb'd our joints, how warmly would he press me to pity his flame, and glow with mutual ardour!—Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love.

Julia. If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you only by laughing heartily at you; but it suits more the situation of my mind, at present, earnestly to entreat you, not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer that unhappiness from your caprices, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

Lydia. O lud! what has brought my aunt here?

Enter MRS MALAPROP, FAG, and DAVID.

Mrs Mal. So! so! here's fine work!—here's fine suicide, paracide, and simulation going on in the fields! and Sir Anthony not to be found to prevent the anti-strophe!

Julia. For heaven's sake, madam, what's the meaning of this?

O 2

Mrs Mal.

Mrs Mal. That gentleman can tell you—'twas he enveloped the affair to me.

Lydia. Do, Sir, will you inform us. (To Fag.)

Fag. Ma'am, I should hold myself very deficient in every requisite that forms the man of breeding, if I delayed a moment to give all the information in my power to a lady so deeply interested in the affair as you are.

Lydia. But quick! quick, Sir!

Fag. True, ma'am, as you say, one should be quick in divulging matters of this nature; for should we be tedious, perhaps while we are flourishing on the subject, two or three lives may be lost!

Lydia. O patience!—Do, ma'am, for heaven's sake! tell us what is the matter?

Mrs Mal. Why! murder's the matter! slaughter's the matter! killing's the matter!—but he can tell you the perpendiculars.

Lydia. Then, prithee, Sir, be brief.

Fag. Why then, ma'am, as to murder—I cannot take upon me to say—and as to slaughter, or manslaughter, that will be as the jury finds it.

Lydia. But who, Sir—who are engaged in this?

Fag. Faith, ma'am, one is a young gentleman whom I should be very sorry any thing was to happen to—a very pretty behaved gentleman!—We have lived much together, and always on terms.

Lydia. But who is this? who! who! who?

Fag. My master, ma'am—my master—I speak of my master.

Lydia. Heavens! What, Captain Absolute!

Mrs Mal. O, to be sure, you are frightened now!

Julia. But who are with him, Sir?

Fag. As to the rest, ma'am, this gentleman can inform you better than I.

Julia. Do speak, friend. (To David.)

David. Look'ee, my Lady—by the mass! there's mischief going on. Folks don't use to meet for amusement with fire-arms, firelocks, fire-engines, fire-screens, fire-office, and the devil knows what other crackers beside!—This, my lady, I say, has an angry flavour.

Julia.

Julia. But who is there beside Captain Absolute, friend?

David. My poor master—under favour for mentioning him first.—You know me, my lady—I am David—and my master of course is, or *was* Squire Acres.—Then comes Squire Faulkland.

Julia. Do, ma'am, let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief.

Mrs Mal. O fie—it would be very inelegant in us:—we should only participate things.

David. Ah! do, Mrs Aunt, save a few lives—they are desperately given, believe me.—Above all, there is that blood-thirsty Philistine, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Mrs Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger!—O mercy!—have they drawn poor little dear Sir Lucius into the scrape?—Why, how you stand, girl! you have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire putrefactions!

Lydia. What are we to do, madam?

Mrs Mal. Why fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief!—here, friend—you can shew us the place?

Fag. If you please, ma'am, I will conduct you.—David, do you look for Sir Anthony. [*Exit David.*]

Mrs Mal. Come, girls!—this gentleman will exhort us.—Come, Sir, you're our envoy—lead the way, and we'll precede.

Fag. Not a step before the ladies for the world!!

Mrs Mal. You're sure you know the spot.

Fag. I think I can find it, ma'am; and one good thing is, we shall hear the report of the pistols as we draw near, so we can't well miss them;—never fear, ma'am, never fear. [*Exit, he talking.*]

SCENE II. *South Parade.*

Enter ABSOLUTE, putting his sword under his great-coat.

Abf. A sword seen in the streets of Bath would raise as great an alarm as a mad dog.—How provoking this is in Faulkland!—never punctual! I shall be obliged to go without him at last.—O, the devil! here's Sir Anthony!—how shall I escape him?

[*Muffles up his face, and takes a circle to go off.*]

Enter SIR ANTHONY,

Sir Anth. How one may be deceived at a little distance! only that I see he don't know me, I could have sworn that was Jack!—Hey!—Gad's life! it is.—Why, Jack,—what are you afraid of? hey!—sure I'm right.—Why, Jack—Jack Absolute! [*Goes up to him.*]

Abs. Really, Sir, you have the advantage of me:—I don't remember ever to have had the honour—my name is Saunderfon, at your service.

Sir Anth. Sir, I beg your pardon—I took you—hey!—why Z—ds! it is—stay—[*Looks up to his face.*] So, so—your humble servant, Mr Saunderfon!—Why, you scoundrel, what tricks are you after now?

Abs. O! a joke, Sir, a joke!—I came here on purpose to look for you, Sir.

Sir Anth. You did! well, I am glad you were so lucky:—but what are you muffled up so for?—what's this for?—hey?

Abs. 'Tis cool, Sir; isn't it?—rather chilly somehow:—but I shall be late—I have a particular engagement.

Sir Anth. Stay.—Why, I thought you were looking for me?—Pray, Jack, where is't you are going?

Abs. Going, Sir!

Sir Anth. Aye—where are you going?

Abs. Where am I going?

Sir Anth. You unmannerly puppy!

Abs. I was going, Sir, to—to—to Lydia—Sir, to Lydia—to make matters up if I could;—and I was looking for you, Sir, to—to——

Sir Anth. To go with you, I suppose.—Well come along.

Abs. O! z—ds! no, Sir, not for the world!—I wish'd to meet with you, Sir,—to—to—to—— You find it cool, I'm sure, Sir—you'd better not stay out.

Sir Anth. Cool!—not at all—Well, Jack—and what will you say to Lydia?

Abs. O, Sir, beg her pardon, humour her—promise and vow:—but I detain you, Sir—consider the cold air on your gout.

Sir Anth.

Sir Anth. O, not at all!—not at all!—I'm in no hurry.—Ah! Jack, you youngsters, when once you are wounded here.—[*Putting his hand to Absolute's breast.*] Hey! what the deuce have you got here?

Abf. Nothing, Sir—nothing.

Sir Anth. What's this? here's something d—d hard.

Abf. O, trinkets, Sir! trinkets—a bauble for Lydia.

Sir Anth. Nay, let me see your taste.—[*Pulls his coat open, the sword falls.*] Trinkets!—a bauble for Lydia!—z—ds! firrah, you are not going to cut her throat, are you?

Abf. Ha! ha! ha!—I thought it would divert you, Sir, though I did'nt mean to tell you till afterwards.

Sir Anth. You did'nt?—Yes, this is a very diverting trinket, truly.

Abf. Sir, I'll explain to you—You know, Sir, Lydia is romantic—dev'lish romantic, and very absurd of course:—now, Sir, I intend, if she refuses to forgive me—to unsheath this sword—and swear—I'll fall upon its point, and expire at her feet!

Sir Anth. Fall upon a fiddle-stick's end!—why, I suppose it is the very thing that would please her—Get along you fool.—

Abf. Well, Sir, you shall hear of my success—you shall hear.—“O, Lydia!—forgive me, or this pointed steel”—says I.

Sir Anth. “O, booby! stab away, and welcome”—says she—Get along!—and d—n your trinkets!

[*Exit Absolute.*]

Enter DAVID, running.

David. Stop him! stop him! Murder! Thief! Fire!—Stop fire! Stop fire!—O! Sir Anthony—call! call! bid'm stop! Murder! Fire!

Sir Anth. Fire! Murder! where?

David. Oons! he's out of sight, and I'm out of breath, for my part; O, Sir Anthony! why didn't you stop him! why didn't you stop him!

Sir Anth. Z—ds! the fellow's mad!—Stop whom! stop Jack?

David.

Anth.

David. Aye, the Captain, Sir!—there's murder and slaughter—

Sir Anth. Murder!

David. Aye, please you, Sir Anthony, there's all kinds of murder, all sorts of slaughter to be seen in the fields: there's fighting going on, Sir—bloody sword and gun fighting!

Sir Anth. Who are going to fight, Duncie?

David. Every body that I know of, Sir Anthony:—every body is going to fight, my poor master, Sir Lucius O'Trigger, your son, the Captain——

Sir Anth. O, the dog!—I see his tricks:—do you know the place?

David. King's Mead Fields.

Sir Anth. You know the way?

David. Not an inch;—but I'll call the Mayor—Aldermen—Constables—Church-wardens—and Beadles—we can't be too many to part them.

Sir Anth. Come along—give me your shoulder! we'll get assistance as we go—the lying villain!—Well, I shall be in such a frenzy—So—this was the history of his trinkets! I'll bauble him! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *King's Mead-Fields.*

SIR LUCIUS and ACRES, with Pistols.

Acres. By my valour, then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance—Odds levels and aims!—I say it is a good distance.

Sir Luc. Is it for muskets or small field-pieces? upon my conscience, Mr Acres, you must leave those things to me.—Stay now—I'll shew you.

[*Measures paces along the stage*]
there now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Z—ds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir Luc. Faith! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight.

Acres.

Acres. No, Sir Lucius—but I should think forty or eight and thirty yards——

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! nonsense, three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

Acres. Odds bullets, no!—by my valour! there is no merit in killing him so near: do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot:—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me?

Sir Luc. Well—the gentleman's friend and I must settle that.—But tell me now, Mr Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius—but I don't understand——

Sir Luc. Why, you must think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and if an unlucky bullet should carry a Quietus with it—I say it will be no time to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A Quietus!

Sir Luc. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you chuse to be pickled and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so.

Sir Luc. I suppose, Mr Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir Luc. Ah! that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing.—Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files!—I've practised that—there, Sir Lucius—there—— [Puts himself in an attitude. —a side-front, hey?—Odd! I'll make myself small enough:—I'll stand edge ways.

Sir Luc. Now—you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim—— [Levelling at him.

Acres. Z—ds! Sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cock'd?

Sir Luc. Never fear.

Acres.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir Luc. Pho! be easy—Well now if I hit you in the body my, bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side—'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part!

Sir Luc. But, there—fix yourself so——

[*Placing him.*

let him see the broad-side of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean thro' your body, and never do any harm at all.

Acres. Clean thro' me!—a ball or two clean thro' me!

Sir Luc. Aye—may they—and it is much the genteelst attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Look'ye! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an aukward posture as a genteel one—so, by my valour! I will stand edge-ways,

Sir Luc. (*Looking at his watch.*) Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah!—no faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey!—what!—coming!——

Sir Luc. Aye—Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

Acres. There are two of them, indeed,—well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius!—we—we—we—we—won't run.—

Sir Luc. Run!

Acres. No—I say—we *won't* run, by my valour!

Sir Luc. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow—as I did.

Sir Luc. O fie! consider your honour.

Acres. Aye—true—my honour—Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honour.

Sir Luc. Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*

Acres. Sir Lucius—if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid—if my valour should leave me!—Valour will come and go.

Sir Luc.

Sir Luc. Then pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is certainly going!—it is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out as it were at the palms of my hands!

Sir Luc. Your honour—your honour.—Here they are.

Acres. O mercy!—now—that I was safe at *Clod-Hall*! or could be shot before I was aware.

Enter FAULKLAND and ABSOLUTE.

Sir Luc. Gentlemen, your most obedient—Hah!—what Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, Sir, you are come here, just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend—then to proceed to business on your own account.

Acres. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

Abf. Hark'ye, Bob, *Beverly's* at hand.

Sir Luc. Well, Mr Acres—I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly.—So, Mr Beverly, (*to Faulkland*) if you'll chuse your weapons, the Captain and I will measure the ground.

Faulk. My weapons, Sir.

Acres. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr Faulkland; these are my particular friends.

Sir Luc. What, Sir, did not you come to fight Mr Acres?

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, Sir.

Sir Luc. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game—you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party by sitting out.

Abf. O pray, Mr Faulkland, fight to oblige Sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr Acres is so bent on the matter.

Acres. No, no, Mr Faulkland—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian—Look'ee, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as leave let it alone.

Sir Luc. Observe me, Mr Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody—
and

and you came here to fight him—Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him—I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

Acres. Why no—Sir Lucius—I tell you, 'tis one *Beverly* I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not shew his face? If *he* were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!—

Abf. Hold, Bob—let me set you right—there is no such man as *Beverly* in the case.—The person who assumed that name is before you; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir Luc. Well, this is lucky—Now you have an opportunity—

Acres. What, quarrel with my dear friend Jack Absolute—not if he were fifty *Beverly's*! Z—ds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me so unnatural.

Sir Luc. Upon my conscience, Mr Acres, your valour has *oozed* away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! Odds Backs and Abettors? I'll be your second with all my heart—and if you should get a *Quietus*, you may command me entirely. I'll get you *snug laid* in the *Abbey here*; or *pickle* you, and send you over to *Blunder-buffs-Hall*, or any thing of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a *Coward*; Coward was the word, by my valour!

Sir Luc. Well, Sir?

Acres. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, 'tisn't that I mind the word *Coward*—Coward may be said in joke—But if you had call'd me a *Poltroon*, Odds Daggers and Balls—

Sir Luc. Well, Sir?

Acres. ——— I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir Luc. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

Abf. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend, Acres—He is a most determined dog

dog—call'd in the country, *fighting Bob*.—He generally kills a man a-week; don't you, Bob?

Acres. Aye—at home!

Sir Luc. Well then, Captain, 'tis we must begin—so come out, my little counsellor, [*draws his sword*.] and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him?

Abf. Come on then, Sir [*draws* ;] since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply.

Enter SIR ANTHONY, DAVID, and the Women.

David. Knock' em all down, sweet Sir Anthony, knock down my master in particular—and bind his hands over to their good behaviour!

Sir Anth. Put up, Jack, or I shall be in a phrenzy—how came you in a duel, Sir?

Abf. Faith, Sir, that gentleman can tell you better than I; 'twas he call'd on me, and you know, Sir, I serve his Majesty.

Sir Anth. Here's a pretty fellow! I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me, he serves his Majesty.—Zounds! sirrah, then how durst you draw the King's sword against one of his subjects?

Abf. Sir, I tell you, that gentleman call'd me out, without explaining his reasons.

Sir Anth. Gad, Sir, how came you to call my son out, without explaining your reasons?

Sir Luc. Your son, Sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

Sir Anth. Zounds! Jack, how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook?

Mrs Mal. Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies—Captain Absolute, come here—How could you intimidate us so?—Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for you.

Abf. For fear I should be kill'd or escape, ma'am?

Mrs Mal. Nay, no delusions to the past—Lydia is convinc'd; speak, child.

Sir Luc. With your leave, ma'am, I must put in a word here—I believe I could interpret the young Lady's silence—Now mark—

P

Lydia.

Lydia. What is it you mean, Sir?

Sir Luc. Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now—this is no time for trifling.

Lydia. 'Tis true, Sir; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections.

Abf. O! my little angel, say you so?—Sir Lucius, —I perceive there must be some mistake here.—With regard to the affront which you affirm I have given you, I can only say, that it could not have been intentional.—And as you must be convinced, that I should not fear to support a real injury—you shall now see that I am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency—I ask your pardon.—But to this lady, while honour'd with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever.

Sir Anth. Well said, Jack, and I'll stand by you, my boy.

Acres. Mind, I give up all my claim—I make no pretensions to any thing in the world—and if I can't get a wife without fighting for her, by my valour! I'll live a batchelor.

Sir Luc. Captain, give me your hand—an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation—and as for the lady—if she chuses to deny her own hand-writing here—
[Takes out letters.]

Mrs Mal. O, he will dissolve my mystery.—Sir Lucius, perhaps there's some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate—

Sir Luc. Pray, old gentlewoman, don't interfere where you have no business.—Miss Languish, are you my Delia, or not?

Lydia. Indeed, Sir Lucius, I am not.

[Lydia and Absolute walk aside.]

Mrs Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeachment—pardon my blushes, I am Delia.

Sir Luc. You Delia—pho! pho! be easy.

Mrs Mal. Why, thou barbarous Vandyke—those letters are mine—When you are more sensible of my
benignity

benignity—perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

Sir Luc. Mrs Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick upon me, I am equally beholden to you.—And, to shew you I am not ungrateful, Captain Absolute, since you have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

Alf. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but here's my friend, fighting Bob, unprovided for.

Sir Luc. Hah! little valour—here, will you make your fortune?

Acres. Odds wrinkles! No.—But give me your hand, Sir Lucius, forget and forgive; but if ever I give you a chance of *pickling* me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce, that's all.

Sir Anth. Come, Mrs Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

Mrs Mal. O Sir Anthony!—men are all barbarians—
[*All retire but Julia and Faulkland.*]

Julia. He seems dejected and unhappy—not fullen—there was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me—O woman! how true should be your judgment, when your resolution is so weak!

Faulk. Julia!—how can I sue for what I so little deserve? I dare not presume—yet hope is the child of penitence.

Julia. Oh Faulkland, you have not been more faulty in your unkind treatment of me, than I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be ungenerous not to admit the same plea for your's.

Faulk. Now I shall be blest indeed!—

[*Sir Anthony comes forward.*]

Sir Anth. What's going on here?—So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant.—Come, Julia, I never interfered before; but let me have a hand in the matter at last.—All the faults I have ever seen in my friend Faulkland, seemed to proceed from what he calls the *delicacy* and *warmth* of his affection for you

—There, marry him directly, Julia, you'll find he'll mend surprisingly ! *[The rest come forward.]*

Sir Luc. Come now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person, but what is content ; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better—

Acres. You are right, Sir Lucius.—So, Jack, I wish you joy—Mr Faulkland the same.—Ladies,—come now, to shew you I am neither vex'd nor angry, odds tabors and pipes ! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour to the New Rooms—and I insist on your all meeting me there.

Sir Anth. Gad, Sir, I like your spirit ; and at night we single lads will drink a health to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs Malaprop.

Faulk. Our partners are stolen from us, Jack—I hope to be congratulated by each other—*yours* for having checked in time the errors of an ill directed imagination, which might have betrayed an innocent heart ; and *mine*, for having, by her gentleness and candour, reformed the unhappy temper of one, who by it made wretched whom he loved most, and tortured the heart he ought to have ador'd.

Abf. Well, Jack, we have both tasted the bitters, as well as the sweets, of love—with this difference only, that *you* always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while *I*—

Lydia. Was always obliged to *me* for it, hey ! Mr Modesty ?—But come, no more of that—our happiness is now as unallay'd as general.

Julia. Then let us study to preserve it so : and while hope pictures to us a flattering scene of future bliss, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting.—When hearts deserving happiness would unite their fortunes, virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest hurtless flowers ; but ill-judging passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends them, when its leaves are dropt !

EPILOGUE.

BY THE AUTHOR.

Spoken by MRS BULKELEY.

LADIES, for *you*—I heard our Poet say—
He'd try to coax some *Moral* from his Play :
“ One moral's plain—cried I—without more fuss ;
“ Man's social happiness all rests on Us—
“ Thro' all the Drama—whether damn'd or not—
“ Love gilds the *Scene*, and *Women* guide the *plot*.
“ From ev'ry rank, obedience is our due—
“ D'y'e doubt?—The world's great stage shall prove it true.”

The *Cit*—well skill'd to shun domestic strife—
Will sup abroad ;—but first—he'll ask his *wife* :
John Trot, his friend, for once, will do the same,
But then—he'll just *step home* to tell his *dame*.

The *furly 'Squire*—at noon resolves to rule,
And half the day—Zounds ! madam is a fool !
Convinc'd at night—the vanquish'd Victor says,
Ah ! Kate ! *you women have such coaxing ways !*—

The *jolly Toper* chides each tardy blade,—
Till reeling *Bacchus* calls on love for aid :
Then with each Toast, he sees fair bumpers swim,
And kisses *Chloe* on the sparkling brim !

Nay, I have heard that Statesmen—great and wise—
Will *sometimes* counsel with a lady's eyes ;
The servile suitors—watch her various face,
She smiles preferment—or she frowns disgrace—
Courties a pension here—there nods a place.

Nor with less awe, in scenes of humbler life,
Is view'd the *mistress*, or is heard the *wife*.

The poorest peasant of the poorest soil,
 The child of poverty, and heir to toil—
 Early from radiant love's impartial light,
 Steals one small spark, to cheer his world of night :
 Dear spark !—that oft thro' winter's chilling woes,
 Is all the warmth his little cottage knows !
 The wand'ring *Tar*—who, not for *years*, has press'd
 The widow'd partner of his *day* of rest—
 On the cold deck—far from her arms remov'd—
 Still hums the ditty which his Susan lov'd :
 And while around the cadence rude is blown,
 The Boatswain whistles in a softer tone.

The *Soldier*, fairly proud of wounds and toil,
 Pants for the *triumph* of his Nancy's smile ;
 But ere the battle, should he list' her cries,
 The lover trembles—and the hero dies !
 That heart, by war and honour steel'd to fear,
 Droops on a sigh, and sickens at a tear !

But Ye more cautious—ye nice-judging few,
 Who give to Beauty only Beauty's due,
 Tho' friends to love—*Ye* view with deep regret,
 Our conquest marr'd—and triumphs incomplete,
 'Till polish'd Wit more lasting charms disclose,
 And Judgment fix the dart which Beauty throws !
 —In female breasts did Sense and Merit rule,
 The lover's mind would ask no other school ;
 Sham'd into sense—the Scholars of our eyes,
 Our Beaux from *Gallantry* would soon be wise ;
 Would gladly light, their homage to improve,
 The Lamp of Knowledge at the Torch of Love !

FINIS.

THE
D U E N N A,
OR THE
DOUBLE ELOPEMENT,
A COMIC OPERA.

DON
DON
DON
LOPI
FAT
DON
DON

DON
DON
DUEN

CHARACTERS.

MEN.

DON FERDINAND,	-	-	MR MATTOCKS.
DON ISAAC MENDOZA,	-	-	MR QUICK.
DON JEROME,	-	-	MR EDWIN.
LOPEZ,	-	-	MR WEWITZER.
FATHER PAUL,	-	-	MR MAHON.
DON CARLOS,	-	-	MR BRETT.
DON ANTONIO,	-	-	MR RHEINHOLD.

WOMEN.

DONNA LOUISA,	-	-	MRS MARTYR.
DONNA CLARA,	-	-	MISS HARPER.
DUENNA,	-	-	MRS WEBB.

FRIARS, MASKS, AND SERVANTS, &c.

THE
D U E N N A,
OR THE
DOUBLE ELOPEMENT.

A COMIC OPERA.

ACT I. SCENE I.

DON JEROME's House, at Night.

Enter LOPEZ, with a Lanthorn.

Lop. WELL, surely, this is the hardest task in nature, to serve a man so far gone in love.—Why, my master neither eats, drinks, nor sleeps; and here I am obliged to attend him, night and day, in the charming amusements of fasting and waking:—This may be pleasant to a lover; but as I am not one of the fighting gentry, I could wish for more substantial entertainment.—At this rate, we shall make a black lent of the whole year;—in a fortnight I shall be shrunk to less than a sizeable eel:—my cheeks are already thinner than parchment, and my jaws, for want of proper use, are almost lock'd:—This master of mine is—but, here he comes.

Enter FERDINAND.

Ferd. Well, firrah, what are you doing here? Did I not order you home?

Lop. I was thinking, Sir, if you would but be persuaded to go home, lie down, and take a little bit of a nap—if it was but by way of novelty, it—

Ferd. Who bid you think, rascal? Begone! and let me no longer be troubled with your impertinence.

Lop.

Lop. Impertinence ! Dear Sir, consider my melancholy condition ; and, if you will indulge any passion, pray let it be compassion for the hollow sound of my stomach—

Ferd. Peace, cormorant ! Thou hast not an idea beyond the gross sensation of eating.

Lop. I confess the charge, and heartily wish it more substantial than mere idea—

Ferd. No more, dolt ! You must fast and wake as long as I please ; so begone home, as you fear correction. *[Exit Ferdinand.]*

Lop. There he goes ! Love has taken full possession of his brain ; and, until he comes to his sober senses, I shall have neither food nor rest.—Plague of all your fine sensations, I say. *[Exit.]*

SCENE II.

Enter ANTONIO, FERDINAND, and GENTLEMEN, with Guittars and mask'd ; who approach under LOUISA'S window.

SERENADE.

Ant. Tell me, my lute, can thy fond strain,
So gently speak thy master's pain ;
So softly sing, so humbly sigh,
That—tho' my sleeping love shall know
Who sings—who sighs below,—
Her rosy slumbers shall not fly.
Thus may some vision whisper more
Than ever I durst speak before !

Ferd. 'Tis all in vain, Antonio ; Louisa will not hear you ; and if she does, 'twill be to little purpose.

Ant. I am not of your opinion, Ferdinand : a sincere and tender lover should never shrink at a faint repulse ; if she is within hearing, I doubt not to convince you of your error.

A I R.

A I R.

Ant. The breath of morn bids hence the night ;
Unveil those beauteous eyes, my fair ;
For all the dawn of love is there,
I feel no day—I own no light.

[*After the song Louisa appears at the window.*]

A I R.

Lou. Waking, I heard thy numbers chide,
Waking, the dawn did bless my sight,
'Tis Phœbus sure that woos I cry'd,
Who speaks in song, who moves in light.

[*Don Jerome above opens his window.*]

A I R. TRIO.

Jer. What vagabonds are these I hear,
Fiddling, fluting, rhyming, ranting,
Piping, scraping, whining, canting,
Fly, scurvy minstrels, fly !

Lou. Nay, pray thee father, why so rough ?

Ant. An humble lover I !

Jer. How durst you, daughter, lend an ear
To such deceitful stuff ?

Quick from the window, fly !

Lou. Adieu, Antonio ! *Ant.* Must you go ?

A. & L. We soon, perhaps, may meet again ;

For tho' hard fortune is our foe,

The god of love will fight for us.—

Jer. Reach me the blunderbuss !

A. & L. The god of love who knows our pain.

Jer. Hence, or these slugs are thro' your brain.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. Chamber in DON JEROME'S House.

Enter DON JEROME and LOUISA.

Jer. 'Tis well the catterwauling puppy made his escape :—a minute more, and I would have made a rid-
dle of his calicoe carcase.

Lou. Why, sir, should his honourable love subject
him to such cruel treatment ?

Jer.

THE DUENNA.

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Fer. Honourable love ! and cruel treatment !—fine romantic babble, truly !—But I'll make you know, fighting, whining madam, that you are a daughter, born to obey, and I a father born to command,—absolute in power and shrewd in discernment :—so no more tricks, d'ye hear ?— [*Excunt into the house*

SCENE IV. Street.

Enter FERDINAND and ANTONIO:

Ant. Nay, prithee, don't be grave, Ferdinand—
I have my perplexities, yet bear up against them.

Ferd. I am the most unfortunate of all men living,
Antonio—

Ant. What is the matter ?—Has Clara and you had any difference ?

Ferd. I am on the rack !—She is so much displeased, that I know not if ever I shall see her again.

Ant. What has she taken ill !—You must have been much to blame ; for Clara is all gentleness.

Ferd. Indeed I found it was impossible to attempt seeing her, the father kept so watchful an eye :—so that I attempted to see her maid ; which succeeded to my wish, and she conveyed me to her apartment.

Ant. A gallant youth, upon my word !—And, then I'll be sworn you took some liberty that has shocked her delicacy.—Tell me, did you dare to take her hand ?

Ferd. Most assuredly I did.

Ant. And did you presume to trespass on a kiss without her consent ?

Ferd. A kiss ! I ravish'd a dozen from her.—

Ant. And can you wonder at her displeasure ?

Ferd. Not in the least ; but I am distracted in having lost her.

AIR.

Ferd. Cou'd I her faults remember,
Forgetting ev'ry charm,
Soon would impartial-reason
The tyrant love disarm :

Q

But

Fer.

But when enrag'd I number
Each failing of her mind,
Love still suggests her beauty,
And fees, while reason's blind.

Ferd. Antonio, you were once fond of Clara: how stands your affection now?

Ant. Your sister now possesses all my soul.—I once thought Clara had charms; but the coldness and neglect with which she treated me, recalled my heart to its wonted state of indifference.

A I R.

Ant. I ne'er could any lustre see
In eyes that would not look on me:
I ne'er saw nectar on a lip,
But where my own did hope to sip.
Has the maid who seeks my heart
Cheeks of rose untouch'd by art?—
I will own the colour true,
When yielding blushes aid their hue.

Is her hand so soft and pure?—
I must press it, to be sure:
Nor can I e'en be certain then,
'Till it grateful presses again.
Must I, with attentive eye,
Watch her heaving bosom sigh?
I will do so—when I see
That heaving bosom sigh for me.

Ferd. I'll do all in my power to assist your suit with my sister:—but I charge you not to attempt running away with her.—You shall have my interest as far as that can serve you.

Ant. Would you not, Ferdinand, run away with Clara, if she would consent?

Ferd. I must confess I should not hesitate: but you will allow, we never do by other men's wives and daughters, as we wish they should do by our's.

Ant. You need be under no uneasiness, on my account, in respect to Clara.

Ant.

Du.
take

Ant. Friendship is the bond of reason :

But, if beauty disapprove,
Heav'n absolves all other treason,
In the heart that's true to love.

The faith which to my friend I swore,
As a civil oath I view :
But to the charms which I adore,
'Tis religion to be true.

Then if to one I false must be ;
Can I doubt which to prefer—
A breach of social faith with thee,
Or sacrilege to love and her.

[*Exit Ant.*]

Ferd. Sure Antonio has no lurking passion for Clara.
And, yet, methinks, this change must be all pretence :
for who that has ever loved her can cease to do so—
But, from his try'd sincerity, how can I doubt his
friendship.

AIR.

Ferd. Tho' cause for suspicion appears,
Yet proofs of her love too are strong ;
I'm a wretch if I'm right in my fears,
And unworthy of bliss if I'm wrong.
What heart-breaking torments from jealousy flow,
Ah ! none but the jealous—the jealous can know !

When blest with the smiles of my fair,
I know not how much I adore ;
Those smiles let another but share,
And I wonder I priz'd them no more,
Then whence can I hope a relief from my woe,
When the falser she seems, still the fonder I grow !

SCENE V. Chamber in DON JEROME's house.

Enter LOUISA and DUENNA.

Duen. Are you still determined, my dear miss, to
take so rash a step?—Are you really so fond of Anto-

nio, as to marry him without a fortune? I fear you will hereafter repent, and reflect on the imprudence of your choice.

A I R.

Lou. Thou can'st not boast of fortune's store,
My love! while me they wealthy call;
But I was glad to find thee poor——
For, with my heart, I'd give thee all:
And then the grateful youth shall own,
I lov'd him for himself alone.

But when his worth my hand shall gain,
No word or look of mine shall show,
That I the smallest thought retain
Of what my bounty did bestow:
Yet still his grateful heart shall own,
I lov'd him for himself alone.

Duen. Indeed, Louisa, I overheard your father say, you shall marry little Isaac, the Jew, to-morrow:—Now, if we succeed in our plot, you shall give him up to me entirely.

Lou. O yes, with all my heart!—But have you gained the maid to my interest?—My brother Ferdinand has promised his assistance.

Duen. All is as you wish——But I must have Antonio's last letter—that must be the cause of his suspicion; and leave the rest to me.

Lou. There it is; (*gives a letter*) and I wish you success with all my heart.

Enter DON JEROME and FERDINAND.

Fer. What is all this scraping, fiddling, and serenading?—I desire I may have no more of it.—And what have you been about, Sir?—disturbing some honest family in the same manner, I suppose; Louisa, to-morrow, child, I have determined you shall marry Isaac Mendoza; and then——

Lou. O, Sir, do not make me miserable!—

Fer. Any thing more?

Lou. Sir, he's a Jew——

Fer.

Jer. That's a mistake ; for he's changed his religion these six weeks—Any thing more ?

Lou. Sir, he's a Portuguese.

Jer. That's another mistake ; for he has forsworn his country.—Any thing more ?

Lou. Sir, he has to me the greatest fault that ever a man had.

Jer. Hey-day !——What's that, pray ?

Lou. He is my aversion.

Jer. Louisa, I care not : I know he loves you, and has the money. The best experiment in nature, to obtain good fruit, is to graft on a crab.——You know my wife and I lived very happy ; yet there was no love between us, and we expected none ; therefore, we were not disappointed :—and the poor woman, when she died, I was so sorry, that I did not care if she had lived. I wish every man in Spain could say as much. And now, Sir, if you have any more advice to give your sister, about disobedience to her father, be brief ; for I intend to lock her up in her room ; and will not see her face, till she returns to her duty.

Ferd. Sir, for my sister's sake, I cannot help speaking——

Jer. Then, Sir, for my sake, hold your tongue.

[*Exit Ferdinand.*]

(*Don Jerome locks up Louisa, and returning, meets the Duenna.*)

Jer. So, madam ! have I found you out !—Here's a witch ! engaged in Antonio's interest. How did you dare to encourage such a piece of mischief ?

Duen. Well, and if I am in Antonio's interest, I am not ashamed to own it ; for I always delighted in the tender passions——

Jer. In the tender passions ! O, you old piece of antiquity, you are an antidote to all the tender passions. Get out of my house, this moment ; out of my house, I say ! you, that I took in to my house to be a scarecrow, to become a decoy-duck !—Get along ! you old piece of iniquity !

Duen. Well, Sir, I don't want to stay in your house ; but I must go and lock up my wardrobe.

Q 3.

Jer.

Jer.

Jer. Your wardrobe ! When you came into my house, you could carry your wardrobe in your comb case, you could, you old dragon !

Duen. And my veil, too,—I hope you would not have me go without my veil.

Jer. Your veil, you can't go without a veil, indeed ! —I suppose you are afraid of your beauty. Well, go along and get your veil, you old devil ! (*He lets the Duenna into Louisa.*) A fine story indeed ! if parents are to be disobeyed on account of love, liking, beauty, and such nonsense :—But, as my father made me marry to please him, without caring two-pence for my bride ; so my daughter shall marry to please me, though age, deformity, and avarice should be my choice.

A T R.

If a daughter you have, she's the plague of your life :
No peace you shall know—tho' you've buried your wife.
At twenty she mocks at the duty you taught her,
O ! what a plague is an obstinate daughter !

Sighing and whining !

Dying and pining !

O ! what a plague is an obstinate daughter !

When scarce in their teens they have wit to perplex us,
With letters and lovers they constantly vex us ;
While each still rejects the fair suitor you've brought
her ;

O ! What a plague is an obstinate daughter !

Wrangling and jangling !

Flouting and pouting ;

O ! what a plague is an obstinate daughter !

Jer. So, madam, you have got your veil :—now march off ;—and, if you please, I'll see you clear of my house.—There, go, go to Antonio !—go to him ; and do you hear ?—since he has got you turned out of a good place, he had better make you amends, by taking you home with himself.

[*Exit Don Jerome.*]

SCENE

THE DUENNA.

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SCENE VI. *Town.*

Enter LOUISA, who peeps through her veil.

Lou. Good b'ye to you, Sir. *[Laughing.]*

Enter CLARA and MAID;

[Louisa sees them and retires.]

Maid. Well, madam, what steps do you intend to pursue, now that you have escaped from your father?

Cla. My intention is to visit the convent of St Catharine's; and, perhaps, hereafter take the veil. Ferdinand has so much offended me, that I cannot forgive him.

Lou. (Coming forward) Now, I have left my father's house, I don't know where to go:—if I knew—Ha! who's here?—methinks it should be Clara.

Cla. That must be Louisa. *[Both lifting up their veils.]*

Lou. Clara!

Cla. Louisa!

Lou. Clara, I am ashamed to inform you what I have done.——Your good sense will certainly condemn my conduct.

Cla. Tell me, my dear.——I am your friend, and you may trust me.

Lou. To be plain then, my dear Clara, I have elop'd from my father's house.

Cla. Indeed, Louisa, I should be angry at so mad an action, but that I have just now committed the same offence.

Lou. And how do you intend to avoid the search of your family?

Cla. I am going to the convent of St Catharine's;—my father's severity is past all bearing; and now your brother has so much offended me, that I shall never forgive him.

A T R.

Cla. When sable night each drooping plant restoring,
Wept o'er the flow'rs her breath did cheer,

A

SCENE

As some sad widow o'er her babe deplores,
Wakes its beauty with a tear.

When all did sleep, whose weary hearts could
borrow

One hour from love and care to rest—

Lo! as I press'd my couch in silent sorrow
My lover caught me to his breast.

He vow'd he came to save me
From those that would enslave me.

Then kneeling,

Kisses stealing,

Endless faith he swore,

But soon I chid him thence;

For had his fond pretence

Obtain'd one favour then—

And had he press'd again,

I fear'd my treacherous heart would grant him more.

Cla. Where is Antonio?—Is he not the partner
of your flight?

Lou. No, nor is he acquainted with my intention.
My father cruelly insisted I should marry Isaac the Jew
to-morrow:—this extraordinary command has compelled
me to this disagreeable step:—Oh, yonder goes
my brother, with the very man my father intended I
should marry.

Cla. Won't it be dangerous if he sees you?

Lou. No, my dear, he never saw me; but his frequent
visits to my father, made him shew his odious
figure very often before my window, from whence he
was shewn to me.

Cla. He comes this way; I'll leave you: (*Going.*)
—But, Louisa, when you see your brother, be sure you
don't tell him I am gone to the convent of St Catha-
rine's, two doors down on the right side of the piazza.

Lou. Oh, you may depend upon it, I will tell him
where you may not be found: (*Going.*) But my dear
friend, will you allow me to make use of your name,
as I may find occasion?

Cla.

Clara. With all my heart; any thing in my power you may command. *[Exit Clara.]*

Enter ISAAC.

Isa. Aye, aye!—there's no doubt this little figure of mine will soon captivate the heart of Don Guzman's daughter.—But whom have we here?—a pretty girl, faith!—how she eyes me! *(she approaches)* aye, aye, she is certainly struck with my dress and figure: and I don't wonder at it; I have some reason to think they are particularly striking.—

Lou. Sir, your servant:—good stranger, I hope you will excuse this liberty;—I have a favour to request of you—

Isa. I am sorry for you, young woman;—but I am positively engaged—

Lou. But, Sir, you don't seem to understand me—

Isa. I can't make you any honourable proposals;—and, if I was to offer any thing else, I suppose you have some good natured brother or cousin, that would run me through the guts.—You have no hopes, child; I am sorry for you.

Lou. It is not your person I solicit; I have no ambition of that kind; my suit is of a very different nature: To be plain with you, Sir, I am told you are acquainted with Signior Antonio;—if it is not too much trouble, and you will lend your pity to a stranger, please to direct him to me.

Isa. Oh,—then, 'tis not me you're fond of?—

Lou. You!—no, indeed.

Isa. Why, then, I must tell you, that you are a little confident, self-sufficient minx, and not the person I took you for.—But pray, young woman, what is your name?

Lou. Clara, Sir, Don Guzman's daughter,—I have left my father's house in pursuit of my lover, who as yet knows nothing of the matter.

Isa. Hum!—this may turn to my advantage;—for Louisa, I know, is fond of Antonio, and, if she should be jealous of Clara, she will then consent to marry me, in revenge for Antonio's falsehood.—*[Aside.]*—Well, Miss

As some sad widow o'er her babe deplores,
Wakes its beauty with a tear.

When all did sleep, whose weary hearts could
borrow

One hour from love and care to rest—
Lo! as I press'd my couch in silent sorrow
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where you may not be found: (*Going.*) But my dear
friend, will you allow me to make use of your name,
as I may find occasion?

Cla.

Clá. With all my heart; any thing in my power you may command. *[Exit Clara.]*

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Isa. Hum!—this may turn to my advantage;—for Louisa, I know, is fond of Antonio, and, if she should be jealous of Clara, she will then consent to marry me, in revenge for Antonio's falsehood.—*[Aside.]*—Well, Miss

Miss, to shew you my good nature, I'll forgive the affront you offered me ; I will endeavour to find your lover, and send him to you immediately.——In the mean time, here comes a friend of mine, I can confide in ; he will take care of you while I look for Antonio.

Enter CARLOS.

Isa. Carlos, this is a young lady whose lover I am going in search of ; you will take her to my lodgings, 'till I find him.—Be sure to take particular care of her.

Lou. Oh, Sir, now that you are acquainted with my situation, sure you won't deceive me ; if you do, it will render me miserable !——

Car. Well said, female politician.

A I R.

Car. Had I a heart for falshood fram'd,

— I ne'er could injure you :

For, though your tongue no promise claim'd,

Your charms would make me true.

To you no soul shall bear deceit,

No stranger offer wrong ;

For friends in all the ag'd you'll meet,

And lovers in the young.

But when they learn that you have blest

Another with your heart,

They'll bid aspiring passions rest,

And act a brother's part.

Then, lady, dread not here deceit,

Nor fear to suffer wrong ;

For friends in all the ag'd you'll meet,

And lovers in the young.

DIALOGUE.

Isa. My mistress expects me, and I must go to her,

Or how can I hope for a smile ?

Lou. Soon may you return a prosperous wooer,

But think what I suffer the while !

Alon

Alone and away from the man that I love,
In strangers I'm forced to confide.

Isa. Dear lady, my friend, you may trust, and he'll
prove
Your servant, protector and guide.

AIR.

Car. Gentle maid, ah! why suspect me?
Let me serve and then reject me.
Can'st thou trust, and I deceive thee?
Art thou sad, and shall I grieve thee?
Gentle maid, ah! why suspect me?
Let me serve thee—then reject me.

TRIO.

Lou. Never may'st thou happy be,
If in ought thou'rt false to me!
Car. Never may I happy, &c.
Isa. Never may he, &c.

Isa. I am sure my good friend will do all in his
power to amuse you, 'till I find Antonio, and send him
to you.—I must on another errand. [Exeunt.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Parlour in DON JEROME's House.

Enter DON JEROME and ISAAC, meeting.

Jer. **A**H! little Isaac, I rejoice to see thee—I
have been thinking of thee, and have been
planning for thy happiness.

Isa. Don Jerome, you are too good to me; and I
am much obliged to you.—I dare say you have thought
me tardy in my visit; but a circumstance has detained
me which I will inform you of—Your neighbour, Don
Guzman's daughter, is run away from her father;—I
met her in my way hither; and she sent me to seek
Antonio.—You see I can keep a secret.

Jer.

Jer. Ah, Isaac, see when my daughter will serve me such a trick.—I am wiser than them all.—I have locked her up, to make sure of her.

Isa. And see when my mistress will serve me so.—My aunt always called me wise little Solomon; let Isaac alone; he's a cunning little dog; a little roguish, now and then, in money matters; but keen, devilish keen!—I will send Antonio to her; in which case he will be no longer my rival with Louisa!—Ay! ay! I am devilish keen—But, what hopes of success have I with your fair daughter?

Jer. Why, indeed, she is like all her sex,—a little perverse; but I have lock'd her up, and have sworn never to see her more, 'till she is obedient to my commands;—and, to-morrow, Isaac, I intend you shall marry her.—O! she is a beautiful creature.

Isa. I do not doubt it.—Please, Sir, to give me a description of her.

Jer. With all my heart.—Let me see now,—her eyes are like diamonds of the first water.—

Isa. Diamonds of the first water; that's very good; But I had much rather they were real diamonds. [*Aside.*]

Jer. Her skin is like the purest dimity;—her teeth are even, and whiter, and better enamelled than elephants—and her voice is like a Virginian nightingale;—and as for dimples—hold,—hold,—dimples did I say?—No, she has but one dimple; but I defy you to tell which is the prettiest, the cheek that has the dimple, or the cheek that has not the dimple:—then her chin;—she has a lovely down on her chin, like the down of a peach.

Isa. Lord! Lord! I am afraid I shall be overpowered with her beauty; and I should not care to be in love with any thing but her money;—but, for my part, I don't much mind whether handsome or otherwise.

AIR.

Isa. Give Isaac the nymph who no beauty can boast,
But health and good humour to make her his toast;

If straight, I don't mind whether slender or fat,
At six feet, or four—we'll ne'er quarrel for that.

Whate'er her complexion, I vow I don't care;
If brown, it is lasting—more pleasing if fair.
And, tho' in her cheeks I no dimples should see,
Let her smile—and each dell is a dimple to me.

Let her locks be the reddest that ever were seen,
And her eyes—be e'en any colour but green;
For in eyes, though so various in lustre and hue,
I swear I've no choice—only let her have two.

'Tis true I'd dispense with a throne on her back,
And white teeth I own—are genteeler than black.
A little round chin too's a beauty I've heard,
But I only desire—that she mayn't have a beard.

Jer. There! there! go your ways to her; that
way leads to her chamber;—the maid will conduct you
to the apartment.

Isa. I must confess, I feel a little bashful.—How
should I address her?—Do you think she will be
struck with my figure?

Jer. You a lover!—and ask that question—let me
instruct you—

A I R.

Jer. When the maid whom we love
No intreaties can move,
Who'd lead a life of pining?
If her charms will excuse
The fond rashness you use,
—Away with idle whinnying!

Ne'er stand like a fool,
With looks sheepish and cool;
—Such bashful love is teasing:
But with spirit address,
And you're sure of success;
For honest warmth is pleasing.

R

Nay,

Nay, though wedlock's your view,
 Like a rake if you'll woo,
 Girls sooner quit their coldness;
 They know beauty inspires
 Less respect than desires—
 Hence love is prov'd by boldness.—
 So ne'er stand like a fool, &c.

[Exit Don Jerome.

SCENE II. *Chamber.*

Isa. Hark! I thought I heard her!—No it was only my fears!—Lord! she must be a most beautiful and enchanting creature!—I think I hear the rattling of silks; it must be she.—O here she comes.—

Enter DUENNA dressed like LOUISA.

Duen. Sir, your servant—

Isa. Your servant, madam—

Duen. My papa has informed me, Sir, that you are the gentleman who has kindly professed a partiality for me.—Will you please to sit down, Sir?

Isa. Madam, I hope—I hope, madam—(*Advances slowly towards the chair.*)—O la!—(*Duenna advancing towards the chair.*)—I don't know what to say.—(*Sees her.*)—Zounds, what a witch!

Duen. What's the matter, Sir?—you appear frightened.

Isa. No, madam, I'm oblig'd to you—Zounds! is this the bit of dimity he told me of?—But as long as she has money enough, I'll try to reconcile her looks. [*Aside.*

Duen. I hope you are not ill, Sir?—

Isa. Only a little surpriz'd, madam; your beauty has overcome me.—Yes, she has the down upon her chin, sure enough. [*Aside.*

Duen. Do, pray sit down, Sir;—you'll wonder at my condescension, Sir;—but I was inform'd you was the poorest, little diminutive wretch;—that you was ill-made, yellow-faced, snub-nos'd;—instead of which I find you so genteel, so well-bred, that I protest I am quite charm'd with you.

Isa. There is something very pretty in the tone of her voice.

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Duen

Duen. You are really so captivating, that I am quite delighted with you,—so much, that maiden modesty gives way to the striking proportion of your person.

Isa. Faith, now I look at her again, she is not quite so ugly.—(*drawing nearer*)—Will you pardon me, madam, if I salute you?—(*kisses her.*)—Faugh!—A man might as well kiss a hedge-hog. [*Aside.*]

Duen. But, Sir, you must pardon me,—you should get rid of that filthy beard;—I protest it is like an artichoke.——

Isa. Why as you say, miss, the razor would not be amiss—for either of us.—*Aside.*—But, I am told you have a sweet voice, miss,—will you please to favour me with a song—by way of passing the time?

Duen. My papa, Sir, is afraid to trust me even with my music-master; and I have not practised for some time;—but I'll try.—(*Endeavours to sing, but screams.*)

Isa. Very like a Virginian nightingale! [*Aside.*]

Duen. I'm very hoarse, Sir.

Isa. Oh, pray, miss, don't trouble yourself to sing any more; I hear you are very hoarse:—but, perhaps, if you took it lower, it would not oblige you to make such very wry faces.

Duen. I have a very great cold, Sir;—but to please so accomplished a gentleman, I'll endeavour to recollect my last new words.

A I R.

Duen. When a tender maid

Is first essay'd

By some admiring swain,

How her blushes rise,

If she meets his eyes,

While he unfolds his pain!

If he takes her hand, she trembles quite!

Touch her lips—and she swoons outright.

While a pit-a pat, &c.

Her heart avows her fright.

But in time appear
Fewer signs of fear :
The youth she boldly views :
If her hand he grasp,
Or her bosom clasp,
No mantling blush ensues !

Then to church well pleased the lovers move,
While her smiles her contentment prove ;
And a pit-a-pat, &c.
Her heart avows her love.

Isa. Well, Miss Louisa, may I hope for the happiness of calling you mine to-morrow ?—It is your father's desire, and what I most ardently wish for.—

Duen. One thing promised, and I shall freely consent.—As my father treated me with such severity, I made a vow never to receive a husband from his hands : But if you will obtain the key of the garden gate, under pretence of our walking, I will elope from thence with you.

Isa. (*Pausing*) In that case, I will not be obliged to make any settlement on her.—(*Aside.*) Yes, Miss, I will endeavour to prevail upon your father, as I am very much in his good graces.

Enter CARLOS.

Car. Well said, brother Isaac, that is to be.—I see you are a brisk, and I hope a thriving wooer.

Isa. As to that, thriving enough ;—but as to your sister, pray, was you ever told there was a family likeness ?

Duen. What does my brother say, Mr Isaac ?

Isa. I am so puzzled, I don't know what to say—for heaven's sake, say or sing something to please her.

Car. I'll strive to please you both.—She is very tenacious of her beauty.—

Isa. I don't doubt it ;—she has a damn'd deal of it ; and she ought to hold it fast.

A I R.

Car. Ah, sure a pair was never seen
So justly form'd to meet by nature ;

The

The youth excelling so in mein,
The maid in ev'ry grace of feature!
O, how happy are such lovers,
When kindred beauties each discovers!

For surely she
Was made for thee,
And thou to bless this lovely creature!

So mild your looks, your children thence
Will early learn the task of duty,

The boys with all their father's sense,
The girls with all their mother's beauty;
O, how happy to inherit

At once such graces and such spirit!

Thus, while you live,

May fortune give—

Each blessing—equal to your merit!

Isa. Carlos, I thank thee. Now, Miss, I'll wait
upon your father and obtain the key.

Duen. Be sure you don't tell my papa how complying I have been.

Isa. O, you may depend Miss upon my prudence.—
Such a damn'd piece of conceit and ugliness I never
saw in my life.—(*Aside.*)

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE III. Chamber.

Enter DON JÉRÔME and ISAAC.

Jer. Well, Isaac, what reception did you meet
with?—Is she not a fine girl?—She has her grand-
father's lip to a hair.

Isa. Aye, and her grandfather's chin to a hair? (*Aside.*)

Jer. Well, Isaac, what reception did you meet with?
How did my daughter behave?

Isa. Why, better than I thought:—But, pray,
how old may your daughter be?

Jer. Let me see:—twelve and eight, ay, is just
twenty.

Isa. Then I'll venture to say, she is the oldest look-
ing girl of her age in the kingdom.—Why, zounds!
she might pass for my grandmother:—and as to her

skin, that you told me was like the purest dimity, by this light it is downright nankeen:—And then her teeth being white—why, they're as black as a coal; where one is ivory, its neighbour is pure ebony, alternately black and white, like the keys of an harpsichord.—Her voice too, you told me, was like a Virginian nightingale: why, it's like a crack'd warming pan:—And, as for dimples!—To be sure she has the devil's own dimples! Yes! and you told me she had a lovely down upon her chin, like the down of a peach; but, damme, if ever I saw such down upon any human creature in my life, except once upon an old goat.

Fer. What, Sir! do you mean to insult me, and abuse my daughter, that is allowed to be the handsomest girl in all Spain!—But I suppose you want to be off from the match.

Isa. What the devil shall I say now?—Why then, seriously, Don Jerome, do you think your daughter handsome?

Fer. The finest girl in all Spain!—

Isa. Lord! Lord! how partial some parents are to their children!—Then since you provoke me to speak, she's a downright witch——

Enter FERDINAND.

Fer. Hey day!—you seem to be upon odd terms, for a father and son-in-law.

Fer. What's that to you, you jack-a-napes!

Isa. He looks plaguy angry with me. I believe I had better draw in my horns, or I shan't have his bit of dimity. (*Aside.*)

A I R.

Isa. Believe me, good sir, I ne'er meant to offend,
My mistress I love, and I value my friend:
To win her and wed her is still my request,
For better for worse—and I swear I don't jest.

Fer. Zounds! you'd best not provoke me, my rage is so high.

Isa. Hold him fast, I beseech you, his rage is so high,
Good sir, you're too hot, and this place I must fly.

Fer.

Jer. You're a knave and a fop, and this place had best fly.

Isa. You are in such a passion now :—(*going to him.*) Did you think I was in earnest?—I was but jelling all the while.—You're so hasty, Don Jerome ;—I had only a mind to joke a little ; that was all upon my honour !

Jer. Then you was not in earnest !—Zounds ! I thought you were in earnest.—But I can forgive a joke as well as any one :—but take care how you carry your jokes so far ; for I was near being in a bit of a passion. Come, get some wine here ; and that will drown all animosities.

A I R, TRIO.

Don Jerome, Isaac, and Ferdinand.

A bumper of good liquor,
Will end a contest quicker,
Than Justice, Judge, or Vicar :
So fill a cheerful glass,
And let good humour pass.

But if more deep the quarrel,
Why sooner drain the barrel,
Than be the hateful fellow,
That's crabbed when he's mellow.

A bumper, &c.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *Street.*

ISAAC and ANTONIO, meeting.

Isa. Good day, *Antonio* :—I am glad to have met you : I have been in pursuit of you.

Ant. I am happy you have found me. What is your business with me *Isaac* ?

Isa. Only a little love affair :—that's all—*Clara* is run away from her father, *Don Guzman* ; and has laid her commands upon me, to bring you to her.—You have no objection, I hope, *Sir* :—a very fine girl!—

Ant.

Jer.

Ant. Two things forbid it:—friendship and honour.—Clara, Don Guzman's daughter.—It cannot be me she sent for.

Isa. Oh, damn your friendship and honour.—Go to her,—I say it was you she sent for, and go you must. She is all impatience, and waiting at Don Carlos's lodgings.—Come, come, and I'll conduct you to her.

Ant. Well, I'll go to her.—Possibly I may be able to serve her, with regard to my friend Ferdinand. (*Aside*)—Lead on, Isaac, and I'll follow.

Isa. Methinks you are devilish loth to visit a pretty wench.—If she had sent for me, I should have taken pity on her instantly. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V. Chamber.

Enter LOUISA.

AIR.

Lou. What bard, O Time, discover,
With wings first made thee move!
Ah! sure he was some lover
Who ne'er had left his love!

For who that once did prove
The pangs which absence brings,
Tho' but one day
He were away,
Could picture thee with wings.
What bard, &c.

Enter CARLOS.

Lou. What has detained you so long?—Where is Antonio?

Car. I have been in search of him, but without success: Isaac is now in pursuit of him.

Lou. Cruel, cruel, man!—You was never in love; else you would never sport with the anxiety of a tender heart! (*Carlos sighs.*) But, was you, Carlos, was you ever in love?

Car.

Car. I was, Louisa.

Lou. And was your mistress true?

Car. Oh! had she been always so I had been happy.

A I R.

Car. Oh, had my love ne'er smil'd on me,

I ne'er had known such anguish,

But, think how false, how cruel she,

To bid me cease to languish;

To bid me hope her hand to gain,

Breath on a flame had perish'd,

And then, with cold and fix'd disdain,

To kill the hope she cherish'd!

Not worse his fate—who, on a wreck

That drove as winds did blow it——

Silent had left the shatter'd deck,

To find a grave below it:

Then land was cried——no more resign'd,

He glow'd with joy to hear it,

——Not worse his fate——his woe to find

The wreck must sink e'er near it.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Two gentlemen below, Sir.

Lou. Antonio and Isaac, no doubt. We'll retire a moment, to see Antonio's surprise. Let us step into this room. *[Goes to the door of the scene.]*

Enter ANTONIO, ISAAC, and SERVANT.

Isa. Where is Clara? I have found Antonio, and have brought him to you at last: for it was with great difficulty I persuaded him to come with me. *[Servant points to the door where Louisa is.——Antonio goes in reluctantly.]*

Isa. I think I'll just take a peep to see the meeting.—So, so, I think he has pretty well reconciled his friendship and honour to the interview.—He does not seem to feel any qualms of conscience now; I'll leave them to settle the rest, and pursue my own business. *[Exit.]*

Enter

Car.

Enter LOUISA, ANTONIO, and CARLOS.

Ant. And are you sure the Jew does not suspect the plot contrived against him?

Lou. Not in the least—he is too vain of his own person; and money is his aim: therefore he thinks every charm is centered in the Duenna.

Ant. How shall I thank you, my dear Louisa, for the confidence you repose in me?—Alas! I feared my all was lost; considering my want of fortune, and that your father's cruelty would oblige us to renounce our love.

Car. Permit me, my dear friend, to wish you joy on this happy meeting.—May every hour of your life prove as happy as the present!

Ant. I thank you, my dear Carlos.—And now, Louisa, that happiness is within our reach, why should we delay one moment?—I'll go and bring a priest, that shall put it out of the power of man to part us.

[*Going.*]

Lou. [*Stopping him*] Stay, Antonio!—Though I have been imprudent so as to leave my father's house, and fly to you for protection, it was to avoid the hated marriage with the Jew:—But you'll shew your love by leaving the management of this to my direction.

Car. Come, come, Antonio, as my sister has hitherto confided in you, 'tis but just you should let her now command.

Ant. I must obey.—But why do we trifle with the hours, so precious to us both?—Your father must be reconciled, when we are made one.

Lou. No more, I beseech you.—I will go to my friend Clara's apartment, and write my letter; I hope you will not fail to meet me there.

Ant. I submit with pleasure, and shall be impatient for the moment.

AIR. TRIO.

ANTONIO, CARLOS, and LOUISA.

Soft pity never leaves the gentle breast,
Where love has been receiv'd a welcome guest;

As

As wand'ring saints, poor huts have sacred made,
 He hallows ev'ry heart he once has sway'd;
 And (when his presence we no longer share)
 Still leaves compassion as a relief there.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Hall in DON JEROME's House.

Enter DON JEROME, and SERVANT.

Jer. WELL, to be sure, those women are strange beings: they never know their own minds a minute.—Why now, it was but this morning that she could never marry Isaac, because he was a Jew: and behold this afternoon she has eloped with him.—Are you sure it was them?—

Serv. O yes, Sir, it was indeed. I saw them in a post-chaise, driving from the garden gate. You know, Sir, it was by your commands the gardiner gave him the key to walk with my young lady on the parterre.

Jer. I rejoice to hear it—the news makes my old heart glad;—and my daughter will be happy.

Enter SERVANT with a Letter.

Serv. My master, Isaac, sends this letter with all due respect to your honour.

Jer. Here, give it me, you dog—This is to inform me, I suppose he is married, and crave my leave to return—I am transported!—(*Reads*)—"Sir, 'your approbation of what I have already done would 'give me the greatest pleasure: I am anxious to receive your blessing; and will immediately return, if 'I have your permission. Louisa's duty to her dearest 'father. By the time this reaches your hand, I shall 'be honoured with the title of your son-in-law. *Isaac 'Mendoza.*"—As I could wish!—Here, Lopez! Francis! Vasquez! put on your best suits of liveries; throw open all the doors; call the cook; bid him prepare a supper with all the delicacies Spain affords:—bid all my neighbours welcome, and request them

them to partake of my happiness; tell them I expect my son and daughter home.—Get the keys of the cellar, and make all happy.

Enter second SERVANT with a Letter.

Serv. This from my young mistress.

Jer. Why, aye, this is from Louisa.—Since Isaac wrote to me, what need the little baggage trouble herself?—One would think they were not together when these were wrote—Let me see—[*Reads*]—“Dearest papa, tho’ I have been so imprudent as to leave your house, I hope you shall pardon the indiscretion: It is with a man who is passionately fond of me, and whose merit equally claims my regard. Your consent, before the ceremony is performed, will make blessed your dutiful daughter, ‘*Louisa*.’”——Go, get pen, ink, and paper, in my room, that I may send my consent with all haste.—My heart is so light, methinks I have renewed my age.

A I R.

Jer. O the days when I was young!

When I laugh’d in fortune’s spite,
Talk’d of love the whole day long,
And with nectar crown’d the night.

Then it was, old father Care,
Little reck’d I of thy frown;
Half the malice youth could bear,
And the rest a bumper drown.

O the days, &c.

Truth, they say, lies in a well;

Why I vow I ne’er could see—

Let the water drinkers tell,

—There it always lay for me:

For, when sparkling wine went round,

Never saw I falsehood’s mask:

But still honest truth I found

In the bottom of each flask.

O the days, &c.

True,

True, at length my vigour's flown,
 I have years to bring decay ;
 Few the locks that now I own,
 And the few I have are grey.
 Yet, old Jerome, thou may'st boast,
 While thy spirits do not tire,
 Still beneath thy age's frost,
 Glows a spark of youthful fire.
 O the days, &c.

SCENE II. *Street.*

Enter FERDINAND, walking about uneasy.

Ferd. To what a dreadful dilemma have I brought myself by my own officious folly !——to lose the only object upon earth I could be happy with !——Yet, why should I condemn myself !——it is too plain her affections are estranged ; and Antonio is the happy man.

A I R.

Ferd. Ah ! cruel maid, how hast thou chang'd
 The temper of my mind !
 My heart, by thee, from mirth estrang'd,
 Becomes, like thee, unkind !

By fortune favour'd, clear in fame,
 I once ambitious was :
 And friends I had that fann'd the flame,
 And gave my youth applause——

But now my weakness all abuse,
 Yet vain their taunts on me ;
 Friends, fortune, fame itself I'd lose,
 To gain one smile from thee.

Yet only thou should'st not despise
 My folly or my woe ;
 If I am mad in others eyes,
 'Tis thou hast made me so.

S

But

True,

But days like these with doubting curst,
I will not long endure ;
Am I despised—I know the worst,
And also know my cure.

If false, her vows she dare renounce,
She instant ends my pain ;
For Oh ! that heart must break at once,
Which cannot heal again.

Enter ISAAC hastily.

Ferd. Whither in such haste, Isaac ?—What's the matter ?

Isa. O, Ferdinand, is that you ?—What think you of the gentle Clara, Don Guzman's daughter ?—She is run away from her father, for the sake of her lover ; and she says he knows nothing of the matter.

Ferd. Dear girl ! no more I did.—Where is she ?

Isa. Be but patient and I'll tell you all.—She sent for him——

Ferd. Well, carry me to her this moment ! (*dragging Isaac*) carry me to her !

Isa. Well, well, mercy on us, how violent you are !—Why I did carry the person she sent for ; it was Don Antonio.

Ferd. Antonio, that she sent for !

Isa. Yes it was.—But he was devilish loth to go, till I persuaded him.—He talked much about friendship and honour :—But I said damn your honour.

Ferd. The devil you did.—O wretch that I am ! misery and distraction come upon me !

Isa. Why, sure, you was not the fool that was in love with her.—Ha ! ha ! ha !

Ferd. You unfeeling Israelite !—you dog ! don't you pity me ? (*Collaring him.*)

Isa. O yes, Sir, I do pity you most heartily.—Dear brother-in-law !——

Ferd. You do pity me, do you, villain ?—(*Going to beat him.*)

Isa. O, no Sir, upon my soul I do not pity you ; my dear brother-in-law !

Ferd.

Ferd. There, then :—take that, villain! and that!
and that. [*Following him round the stage, beating him.*]

Isa. Oh! my dear brother-in-law,—that is to be—
Oh! spare me, my dear brother!

Ferd. Then, firrah, begone! and remember, 'tis
only your insignificance that protects you.

Isa. Then egad, my insignificance is the best friend
I ever had in all my life.—Oh! what a cursed, bully-
headed, bloody-minded, swaggering dog it is! [*Exit*
stealing off.]

A I R.

Ferd. Sharp is the woe that wounds the jealous mind,
When treach'ry two fond hearts wou'd rend,
But O! how keener far the pang, to find
That traitor in our bosom friend.

SCENE III. *Wood.*

Enter CLARA, LOUISA, and ANTONIO.

A I R.

Clara. By him we love offended,
How soon our anger flies!
One day apart 'tis ended,
Behold him, and it dies!
Last night your roving brother
Enrag'd I bade depart,
And sure his rude presumption
Deserv'd to lose my heart.
Yet, were he now before me,
In spite of injur'd pride,
I fear my eyes wou'd pardon—
Before my tongue could chide.
By him we love, &c.

With truth the bold deceiver
To me thus oft has said—
“ In vain would Clara slight me,
“ In vain she would upbraid!

' No scorn those lips discover——
 ' Where dimples laugh the while ;
 ' No frowns appear resentful,
 ' Where heav'n has plac'd a smile !"
 By him we love, &c.

Cla. My dear Louisa, you will soon be happy——
 For my part, I am doom'd to pass the long solitary
 hours in this dreary mansion—Heigho ! [*Sighing.*]

Lou. Indeed, my dear, you are mistaken ; for, if
 my father does not give his consent, how are we to
 live ?

Ant. Do not grieve, my dearest love !——

A I R.

Ant. How oft, Louisa, hast thou said
 (Nor wilt thou the fond boast disown,)
 Thou wouldst not lose Antonio's love
 To reign the partner of a throne !

And by those lips that spoke so kind !
 And by this hand I press to mine !
 —To gain a subject nation's love,
 I swear I would not part with thine.

Then, how, my soul, can we be poor,
 Who own what kingdoms could not buy !
 Of this true heart thou shalt be queen,
 And serving thee—a monarch I.

Thus uncontroll'd in mutual bliss
 And rich in love's exhaustless mine—
 Do thou snatch treasures from my lips,
 And I'll take kingdoms back from thine !

Enter a NUN, veiled, with a letter.

Lou. Now, indeed, we are nearer happiness.—Here's
 a wonderful change ;—my father's free consent.

Ant. Is it possible !—This is joy beyond expression !
 —Let us no longer delay our bliss ?—I will fly and
 bring the priest.

Lou. Stay, Antonio.

Ant. My life !——

Lou.

Lou. Had not you better take me with you?—perhaps you will not find me here on your return.

Ant. Thus let me thank thee for thy fond advice.
[*Kisses her.* [*Exeunt Antonio and Louisa.*

Clara. There they go, as happy as heart can wish :—
May every blessing attend them !

Enter FERDINAND looking after ANTONIO and LOUISA.

Gla. So! this should be Ferdinand.—How got he in, I wonder!—By the help of a bribe, no doubt.

Ferd. [*Looking after them.*] There is Antonio with her; and, for ought I know, going to be married. I shall run distracted! [*Going.*]

Gla. Sir! Sir!—[*Stopping him.*]

Ferd. Psha! let me alone——

Cl. What do you want, Sir?—you appear unhappy.

Ferd. Not you, child, not you. But, pray, good nun, is not that Antonio?

Cla. Affuredly it is.

Ferd. And, is not that Clara with him?

Cla. Clara is not yet gone out of the garden.

Ferd. One question more; and I'll trouble you no further;—Are they going to be married?

Cla. They are, Sir.

Ferd. Oh! unfortunate that I am—But I will follow them,—upbraid them with their falsehood,—and—have done for ever. [Exit Ferdinand.]

Cl. Well, I'll follow. Louisa may not be the only bride to-day.

AIR.

Cl. Adieu, thou dreary pile, where never dies
The sullen echo of repugnant sighs !
Ye sister mourners of each lonely cell,
Inur'd by hymns and sorrows, fare ye well !
For happier scenes, I fly this darksome grove,
To saints a prison, but a tomb of love !

SCENE IV. *Monastery.*

Enter FATHER PAUL, FATHER FRANCIS, and other FRIARS, drinking.

GLEE AND CHORUS.

This bottle's the sun of our table,
His beams are rosy wine,
We —— planets who are not able,
Without his help, to shine.

Let mirth and glee abound,
You'll soon grow bright,
With borrow'd light,
And shine as he goes round!

F. Paul. Come fill, Here's to the blue-ey'd nun of St Catharine's. *[drinks.]*

All. Agreed—The blue-ey'd nun of St Catharine's. *[drink.]*

F. Paul. Here's to the mother-abbess. *[drinks.]*

All. To our mother-abbess. *[drink.]*

F. Paul. Have there been any legacies or donations since our last meeting?

F. Fran. Fifty pounds from an usurer, on his death-bed, to pray his soul through purgatory.

F. Paul. Well, that will pay for candles, brother Francis——Any thing more?

F. Fran. A thousand dollars, from a lady, to be applied to charitable uses.

F. Paul. The best of uses,—to discharge our wine bill.

F. Fran. A large silver lamp, by Don Emanuel de Castro, to be kept continually burning in the tomb of St Anthony.

F. Paul. Which we will melt down, to bring in more luscious provision than any we have yet mentioned: for St Anthony is not afraid to be left in the dark—tho' he was——

F. Fran. Forty pistoles I have received for confessions.

F. Paul.

F. Paul. Very good—that will help to pay our butcher's bill.

[*A loud knocking at the door,—they all retire, but Paul and Francis.*]

Enter a PORTER—meagre and pale.

F. Paul. (*With a glass in his hand*) What do'st thou want?

Por. I thought you had done your morning rites.

F. Paul. Done!—No!—Have we, brother Francis?

F. Fran. No, not by a bottle, man.

F. Paul. I suppose thy sinful disposition has brought thee to see what was to be had, to gratify thy worldly voracious appetite. Thy pamper'd looks are a scandal to our order. If you are hungry, are there not the roots of the earth! (*eats cake.*) And, if you are dry, is there not the clear stream? (*Drinks wine.*)

Por. Some company would speak with your holiness, if your morning devotions are ended.

[*Father Paul drinks, and gives the glass to the Porter, who puts it to his mouth.*]

F. Paul. So, you sinful wretch, if there had been any thing in it, you would have drank it.—Admit them.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

Enter ANTONIO and ISAAC.

Ant. We come, father, to solicit your aid to join us in nuptial bands, and hope not too late.

F. Paul. Yes, Sir, but you are, by half an hour—you must be patient, and wait another day.

Ant. But, good father, love is impatient, and we cannot wait;—pray dispatch us [*Giving gold.*] And let this plead for me.

F. Paul. Nay, now you offend me grossly; I must not take gold; it hurts my conscience; but here's a place in my habit, you may lodge it in: Upon your own head be the sin. And on this side is another.

Isa.

Paul.

Isa. O, I understand you. There, father: I shall need your help presently; but dispatch your present office.

P. Paul. The sins of this town almost distract me—they make me linger in flesh, to see them daily committed before my eyes.

Ant. One would imagine, indeed, they were under your nose; for it blushes more than the rest of your face.

Isa. Here comes Ferdinand: I'll not stay, for he's a desperate fellow—Antonio, you had better go.

Ant. Why should I fear him?—Blessed with my love, I'll stand my ground.

Isa. The devil take me if I do;—he almost broke my bones just now; so I'll take my leave.—Father, you shall see me again.

Enter FERDINAND.

Ferd. Antonio, is this your friendship? How can you answer for such treatment? Thy life shall pay for it: Draw, Sir! [*Draws.*]

Lou. Why, brother, you appear angry: (*Discovering herself.*) What's the matter?

Enter CLARA behind him, veiled.

F. Paul. Certainly the man has not a mind to marry his own sister!

Ferd. Louisa!—Is it you I have mistaken for Clara all this while?—Where has she fled?

Cla. What is it you want, Sir?—Not you child, not you— [*mocking him.*]

Ferd. Antonio, I blush for my folly—Louisa, what shall I say?—Clara, my angel, can you forgive me? Love is blind.

DUETTO.

Oft does Hymen smile to hear,
Worldly vows of feign'd regard;
Well he knows when they're sincere,
Never slow to give reward.

For his glory is to prove
Kind to those who wed for love.

SCENE

SCENE VI. *Parlour.**Enter DON JEROME.*

Jer. Methinks, they are very slow :—I wish they were come.—Oh, here's Isaac.

Enter ISAAC.

Isa. I am returned with joy to crave your blessing.

Jer. But where's my daughter?—my dear girl!—Why did not she accompany you?—Every moment is an age 'till I see her.

Isa. She is waiting for your permission to throw herself at your feet.

Jer. Run!—bring her to me :—She'll gladden my old heart. (*Exit Isaac.*) I am all joy.

Enter ISAAC and DUENNA.

Jer. O Lord!—Is that my daughter?—Why the man is surely mad!

Isa. Why do you look at her so, Sir?—Go, my dear, and throw your snowy arms round your papa. He will forgive you. Don't be uneasy—go to him—

Duen. My dear papa! (*Running to him and embracing him.*) You will not sure be so cruel as to disown me!

Jer. Papa! dear papa!—What the devil do you mean? you have not married Ursula the old Duenna, have you, instead of my beautiful daughter?

Duen. O, you are a cruel parent!

Jer. O, Lord! Lord! will nobody relieve me from this old hag?

Isa. Did I not tell you, she was as ugly as the devil; and you would not believe me!—And so then I am taken in with this old Jezebel.

Duen. I'll let you know whether I am not a match too good for you.

Enter ANTONIO and LOUISA.

Ant. I come, sir, with my dear Louisa, to ask forgiveness, and to claim your blessing.

Jer. You shall have neither, sir! You have cheated me of my daughter;—and do you think I can so easily forgive it?

Ant.

Ant. There, fir, is your own consent, in your own hand-writing, signed by your own name.

Jer. Sir, it was through a stratagem you obtained that consent—and you shall not possess a rial of her fortune.

Lou. Believe me, fir, I never meant to deceive you, or marry without your consent:—I would not receive Antonio for a husband, untill I obtained it by your letter.

Jer. No matter, madam—You shall not have a maravedie of your fortune.

Ant. I care not, fir:—in herself I have a treasure.—Give me but your blessing, make me happy, and I am content.

Jer. A generous fellow this, [*aside.*] Do you think, fir, you are the only man in Spain, that can do a generous act? There, Sir: since my daughter is your's, her fortune shall be also:—There's my blessing too:—and since you are so generous as to despise her fortune, no man in Spain deserves it better. [*They both kneel.*]

Lou. Accept our grateful thanks!—

Enter FERDINAND and CLARA.

Jer. Hey day! what have we here?—Have you been robbing a nunnery?

Ferd. This is Donna Clara, Sir, Don Guzman's daughter, and my wife, with a good fortune.

Jer. Come here, you little slut, and kiss me. You young dog, you have made a good choice. Bless you, my children! And may you ever be as happy as at present.

Isa. And must I stand to my bargain with this old witch?

Duen. Upon my word, you have no need to complain; who are you? [*Following him round the stage.*] I will let you know, Sir, I have a brother an Alguzile, that wears a sword,—you ill-looking diminutive wretch!

Isa. The devil's dam is broke loose, and her whole fury is levelled at me.

Lou. Well, little Isaac, you were always keen—
devilish keen.—

Ferd.

Ferd. Your mother always called you wise little Solomon.

Jer. No body could ever put a trick upon you—
 Hey! Isaac! —

Ferd. Cunning little Isaac!

I/a. Is there no way to avoid these everlasting tongues? This door will befriend me:—I'll fly to Jerusalem, to get rid of that bit of demity. [*Exit Isaac.*]

Duen. Fly where you will—I'll follow you.

[*Exit Duenna.*]

FINALE AND CHORUS.

Jer. Come now for jest and smiling,
 Both old and young beguiling,
 Let us laugh and play, so blyth and gay,
 'Till we banish care away.

Lou. Thus crown'd with dance and song,
 The hours shall glide along,
 With a heart at ease—merry, merry glees,
 Can never fail to please.

Ferd. Each bride with blushes glowing,
 Our wine as rosy flowing,
 Let us laugh and play, &c.

Ant. Then a health to every friend,
 The night's repast shall end,
 With a heart at ease, &c.

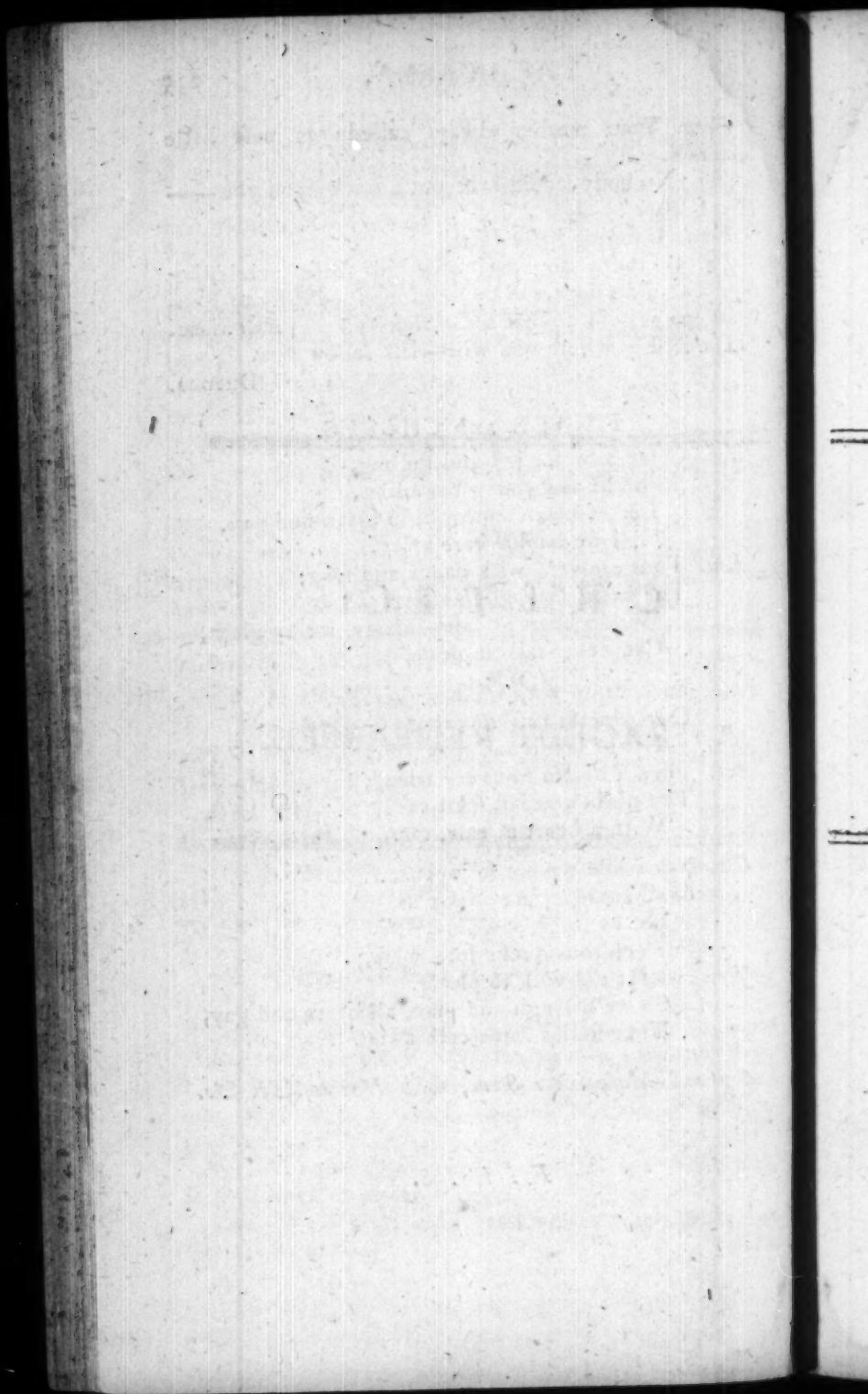
Cla. Nor while we are so joyous,
 Shall anxious care annoy us,
 Let us laugh and play, &c.
 For gen'rous guests like these,

Jer. Accept the wish to please.
 So we'll laugh and play, all blyth and gay,
 Your smiles drive care away.

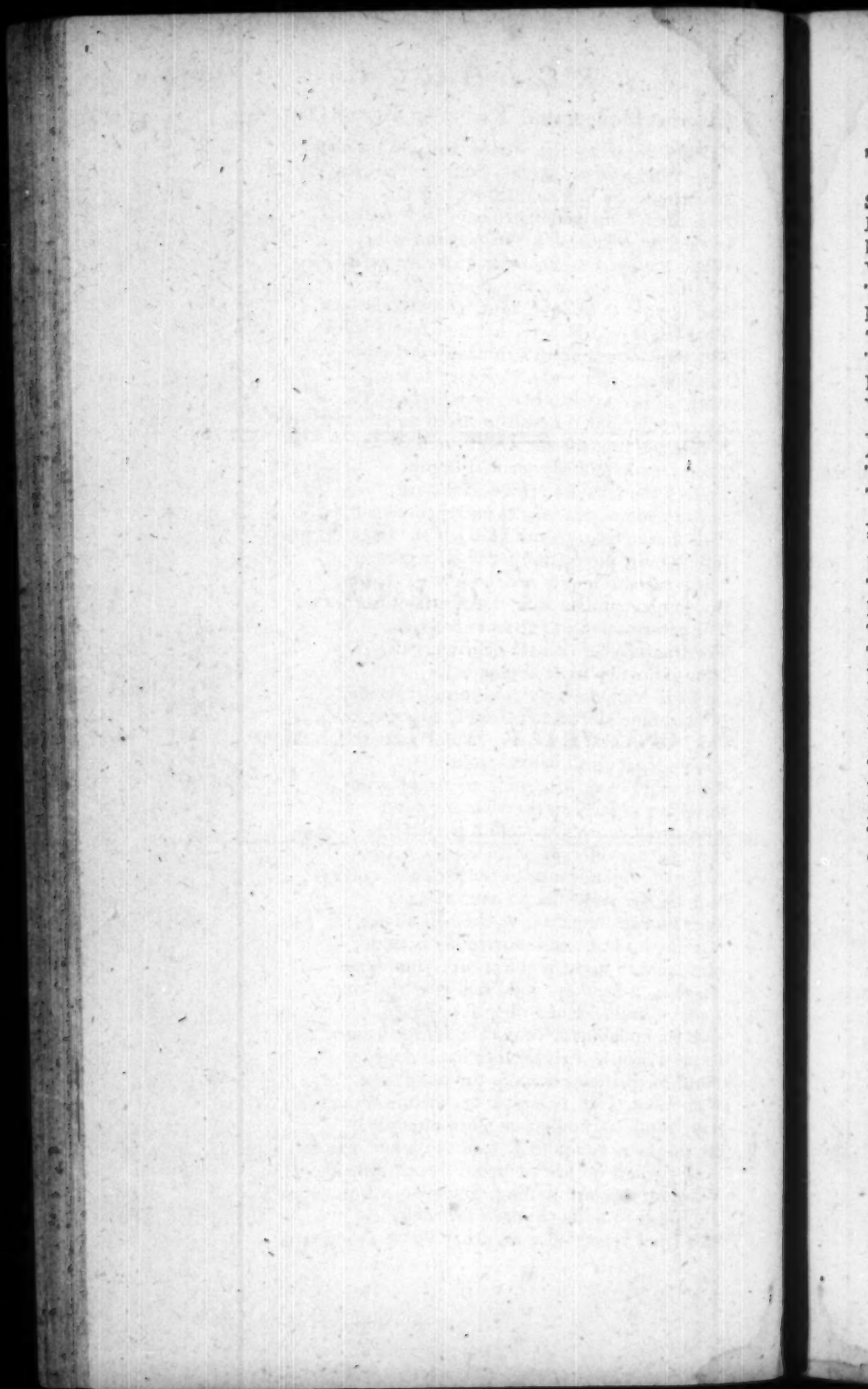
A grand Masquerade Scene, with Dances, &c. &c.

FINIS.

Ferd.



THE
CRITIC:
OR,
A TRAGEDY REHEARSED.



P R O L O G U E.

By the Honourable RICHARD FITZPATRICK.

THE Sister Muses, whom these realms obey,
 Who o'er the Drama hold divided sway,
 Sometimes, by evil counsellors, 'tis said
 Like earth born potentates have been misled:
 In those gay days of wickedness and wit,
 When Villiers criticiz'd what Dryden writ,
 The Tragick Queen, to please a tasteless crowd,
 Had learn'd to bellow, rant, and roar so loud,
 That frighten'd Nature, her best friend before,
 The blust'ring beldam's company forswore.
 Her comic Sister, who had wit 'tis true,
 With all her merits, had her failings too;
 And would sometimes in mirthful moments use
 A stile too slipant for a well-bred Muse.
 Then female modesty abash'd began
 To seek the friendly refuge of the fan,
 Awhile behind that slight entrenchment stood,
 'Till driven from thence, she left the stage for good.
 In our more pious, and far chaster times!
 These sure no longer are the Muse's crimes!
 But some complain that, former faults to shun,
 The reformation to extremes has run.
 The frantick hero's wild delirium past,
 Now insipidity succeeds bombast;
 So slow Melpomene's cold numbers creep,
 Here dullness seems her drowsy court to keep,
 And we are scarce awake, whilst you are fast asleep.
 Thalia, once so ill behav'd and rude,
 Reform'd; is now become an arrant prude,
 Retailing nightly to the yawning pit,
 The purest morals, undesi'd by wit!
 Our Author offers in these motley scenes,
 A slight remonstrance to the Drama's queens,
 Nor let the goddesses be over nice;
 Free spoken subjects give the best advice.
 Although not quite a novice in his trade,
 His cause to night requires no common aid.
 To this, a friendly, just, and pow'rful court,
 I come Ambassador to beg support.
 Can he undaunted, brave the critick's rage?
 In civil broils, with brother bards engage?
 Hold forth their errors to the public eye,
 Nay more, e'en News-papers themselves desy?
 Say, must his single arm encounter all?
 By numbers vanquish'd, e'en the brave may fall
 And though no leader should success distrust,
 Whose troops are willing, and whose cause is just;
 To bid such hosts of angry foes defiance,
 His chief dependance must be, **YOUR ALLIANCE.**

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Dangle	-	Mr DODD.
Sneer	-	Mr PALMER.
Sir Fretful Plagiary	-	Mr PARSONS.
Signor Pasticcio Ritornello	-	Mr DELPINI.
Interpreter.	-	Mr BADDELEY.
Under Prompter	-	Mr PHILLIMORE.
Puff	-	Mr KING.
Mrs Dangle	-	Mrs HOPKINS.
Italian Girls	-	{ Miss FIELD, and the
		{ Miss ABRAMS.

Characters of the TRAGEDY.

Lord Burleigh	-	Mr MOODY.
Governor of Tilbury Fort	-	Mr WRIGHTEN.
Earl of Leicester	-	Mr FARREN.
Sir Walter Raleigh	-	Mr BURTON.
Sir Christopher Hatton	-	Mr WALDRON.
Master of the Horse	-	Mr KENNY.
Beef-eater	-	Mr WRIGHT.
Justice	-	Mr PACKER.
Son	-	Mr LAMASH.
Constable	-	Mr FAWCETT.
Thames	-	Mr GAWDRY.
Don Ferolo Whiskerandos	-	Mr BANNISTER, jun.
1st Niece	-	Miss COLLET.
2d Niece	-	Miss KIRBY.
Justice's Lady	-	Mrs JOHNSTON.
Confidant	-	Mrs BRADSHAW.
Tilburina	-	Miss Pope.

Guards, Constables, Servants, Chorus, Rivers, Attendants, &c. &c.

THE
C R I T I C.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Mr and Mrs DANGLE at Breakfast, and reading Newspapers.

Dangle. (reading.)

"BRUTUS to Lord North."—"Letter the second
"on the State of the Army."—Pshaw! "To
"the first L—dash D of the A—dash Y."—Genuine
"Extract of a letter from St Kitt's,—"Coxheath In-
"telligence."—"It is now confidently asserted that Sir
"Charles Hardy."—Pshaw!—Nothing but about the
"fleet, and the nation!—and I hate all politics but thea-
"trical politics.—Where's the Morning Chronicle?"

Mrs Dangle. Yes, that's your Gazette.

Dangle. So, here we have it.—

"Theatrical intelligence extraordinary."—We hear
"there is a new tragedy in rehearsal at Drury-Lane
"Theatre, call'd the Spanish Armada, said to be writ-
"ten by Mr Puff, a gentleman well known in the thea-

“trical world ; if we may allow ourselves to give credit to the report of the performers, who, truth to say, are in general but indifferent judges, this piece abounds with the most striking and received beauties of modern composition”—So! I am very glad my friend Puff’s tragedy is in such forwardness.—Mrs Dangle, my dear, you will be very glad to hear that Puff’s tragedy—

Mrs Dangle. Lord, Mr Dangle, why will you plague me about such nonsense?—Now the plays are begun I shall have no peace.—Isn’t it sufficient to make yourself ridiculous by your passion for the theatre, without continually teasing me to join you? Why can’t you ride your hobby-horse without desiring to place me on a pillion behind you, Mr Dangle?

Dangle. Nay, my dear, I was only going to read—

Mrs Dangle. No, no; you will never read any thing that’s worth listening to:—you hate to hear about your country; there are letters every day with Roman signatures, demonstrating the certainty of an invasion, and proving that the nation is utterly undone.—But you never will read any thing to entertain one.

Dangle. What has a woman to do with politics, Mrs Dangle?

Mrs Dangle. And what have you to do with the theatre, Mr Dangle? Why should you affect the character of a Critic? I have no patience with you—haven’t you made yourself the jest of all your acquaintance by your interference in matters where you have no business? Are not you call’d a theatrical Quidnunc, and a mock Mæcenas to second-hand authors?

Dangle. True; my power with the Managers is pretty notorious; but is it no credit to have applications from all quarters for my interest?—From lords to recommend fiddlers, from ladies to get boxes, from authors to get answers, and from actors to get engagements.

Mrs Dangle. Yes, truly; you have contrived to get a share in all the plague and trouble of theatrical property, without the profit, or even the credit of the abuse that attends it.

Dangle.

Dangle. I am sure, Mrs Dangle, you are no loser by it, however; you have all the advantages of it:—mightn't you, last winter, have had the reading of the new Pantomime a fortnight previous to its performance? And doesn't Mr Fosbrook let you take places for a play before it is advertis'd, and set you down for a Box for every new piece through the season? And didn't my friend, Mr Smatter, dedicate his last Farce to you at my particular request, Mrs Dangle?

Mrs Dangle. Yes; but wasn't the Farce damn'd, Mr Dangle? And to be sure it is extremely pleasant to have one's house made the morley rendezvous of all the lackeys of literature:—The very high change of trading authors and jobbing critics!—Yes, my drawing-room is an absolute register-office for candidate actors, and poets without character; then to be continually alarmed with Misses and Ma'ams piping histeric changes on Juliets and Dorindas, Pollys and Ophelias; and the very furniture trembling at the probationary starts and unprovok'd rants of would-be Richards and Hamlets!—And, what is worse than all, now that the Manager has monopoliz'd the Opera-House, haven't we the Signors and Signoras calling here, sliding their smooth semibreves, and gargling glib divisions in their outlandish throats—with foreign emissaries and French spies, for ought I know, disguised like fidlers and figure dancers!

Dangle. Mercy! Mrs Dangle!

Mrs Dangle. And to employ yourself so idly at such an alarming crisis as this too—when, if you had the least spirit, you would have been at the head of one of the Westminster associations—or trailing a volunteer pike in the Artillery Ground?—But you—o'my conscience, I believe if the French were landed to-morrow, your first enquiry would be, whether they had brought a theatrical troop with them?

Dangle. Mrs Dangle, it does not signify—I say the stage is “the Mirror of Nature,” and the actors are “the Abstract, and brief Chronicles of the Time:”—and pray what can a man of sense study better?—Besides, you will not easily persuade me that there is no credit or
im.

importance in being at the head of a band of critics, who take upon them to decide for the whole town, whose opinion and patronage all writers solicit, and whose recommendation no manager dares refuse!

Mrs Dangle. Ridiculous!—Both managers and authors of the least merit, laugh at your pretensions.—The Public is their Critic—without whose fair approbation they know no play can rest on the stage, and with whose applause they welcome such attacks as yours, and laugh at the malice of them, where they can't at the wit.

Dangle. Very well, Madam—very well.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mr Sneer, Sir, to wait on you.

Dangle. O, shew Mr Sneer up. [*Exit Servant.* Plague on't, now we must appear loving and affectionate, or Sneer will hitch us into a story.

Mrs Dangle. With all my heart; you can't be more ridiculous than you are.

Dangle. You are enough to provoke——

Enter MR SNEER.

—Ha! my dear Sneer, I am vastly glad to see you. My dear, here's Mr Sneer.

Mrs Dangle. Good morning to you, Sir.

Dangle. Mrs Dangle and I have been diverting ourselves with the papers.—Pray, Sneer, won't you go to Drury-lane theatre the first night of Puff's tragedy?

Sneer. Yes; but I suppose one shan't be able to get in, for on the first night of a new piece they always fill the house with orders to support it. But here, Dangle, I have brought you two pieces, one of which you must exert yourself to make the managers accept, I can tell you that, for 'tis written by a person of consequence.

Dangle. So! now my plagues are beginning.

Sneer. Aye, I am glad of it, for now you'll be happy. Why, my dear Dangle, it is a pleasure to see how you enjoy your volunteer fatigue, and your solicited solicitations.

Dangle. It's a great trouble—yet, egad, its pleasant

too.—Why, sometimes of a morning, I have a dozen people call on me at breakfast time, whose faces I never saw before, nor ever desire to see again.

Sneer. That must be very pleasant indeed !

Dangle. And not a week but I receive fifty letters, and not a line in them about any business of my own.

Sneer. An amusing correspondence !

Dangle (reading.) “ Bursls into tears and exit.” What, is this a tragedy ?

Sneer. No, that’s a genteel comedy, not a translation—only taken from the *French* ; it is written in a stile which they have lately tried to run down ; the true sentimental, and nothing ridiculous in it from the beginning to the end.

Mrs Dangle. Well, if they had kept to that, I should not have been such an enemy to the stage, there was some edification to be got from those pieces, Mr Sneer !

Sneer. I am quite of your opinion, Mrs Dangle ; the theatre, in proper hands, might certainly be made the school of morality ; but now, I am sorry to say it, people seem to go there principally for their entertainment !

Mrs Dangle. It would have been more to the credit of the Managers to have kept it in the other line.

Sneer. Undoubtedly, Madam, and hereafter perhaps to have had it recorded, that in the midst of a luxurious and dissipated age, they preserv’d *two* houses in the capital, where the conversation was always moral at least, if not entertaining !

Dangle. Now, egad, I think the worst alteration is in the nicety of the audience.—No double entendre, no smart inuendo admitted ; even Vanburgh and Congreve obliged to undergo a bungling reformation !

Sneer. Yes, and our prudery in this respect is just on a par with the artificial bashfulness of a courtesan, who encreases the blush upon her cheek in an exact proportion to the diminution of her modesty.

Dangle. Sneer can’t even give the public a good word !—But what have we here ?—This seems a very odd—

Sneer. O, that’s a comedy, on a very new plan ; re-
plete

plete with wit and mirth, yet of a most serious moral ! You see it is call'd "THE REFORMED HOUSEBREAKER ;" where by the mere force of humour, HOUSEBREAKING is put into so ridiculous a light, that if the piece has its proper run, I have no doubt but that bolts and bars will be entirely useless by the end of the season.

Dangle. Egad, this is new indeed !

Sneer. Yes ; it is written by a particular friend of mine, who has discovered that the follies and foibles of society, are subjects unworthy the notice of the Comic Muse, who should be taught to stoop only at the greater vices and blacker crimes of humanity—gibbeting capital offences in five acts and pillorying petty larcenies in two.—In short, his idea is to dramatize the penal laws, and make the stage a court of ease to the Old Bailey.

Dangle. It is truly moral.

Enter SERVANT.

Sir Fretful Plagiary, Sir.

Dangle. Beg him to walk up.—[*Exit Servant.*] Now, Mrs Dangle, Sir Fretful Plagiary is an author to your own taste.

Mrs Dangle. I confess he is a favourite of mine, because every body else abuses him.

Sneer. —Very much to the credit of your charity, Madam, if not of your judgment.

Dangle. But, egad, he allows no merit to any author but himself, that's the truth on't—tho' he's my friend.

Sneer. Never.—He is as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six-and-thirty : and then the insidious humility with which he seduces you to give a free opinion on any of his works, can be exceeded only by the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations.

Dangle. Very true, egad—tho' he's my friend.

Sneer. Then his affected contempt of all newspaper strictures ; tho' at the same time, he is the forest man alive, and shrinks like scorch'd parchment from the fiery ordeal of true criticism : yet is he so covetous of popularity,

larity, that he had rather be abused than not mentioned at all.

Dangle. There's no denying it—tho' he is my friend.

Sneer. You have read the tragedy he has just finished haven't you?

Dangle. O yes; he sent it to me yesterday.

Sneer. Well, and you think it execrable, don't you?

Dangle. Why between ourselves, egad I must own—tho' he's my friend—that it is one of the most—He's here [*Aside*—finished and most admirable perform—

[*Sir Fretful without*] Mr Sneer with him did you say?

Enter SIR FRETFUL.

Ah, my dear friend!—Egad, we were just speaking of your Tragedy.—Admirable, Sir Fretful, admirable!

Sneer. You never did any thing beyond it, Sir Fretful—never in your life.

Sir Fretful. You make me extremely happy; for without a compliment, my dear Sneer, there isn't a man in the world whose judgment I value as I do yours.—And Mr Dangle's.

Mrs Dangle. They are only laughing at you, Sir Fretful; for it was but just now that—

Dangle. Mrs Dangle!—Ah, Sir Fretful, you know Mrs Dangle.—My friend Sneer was rallying just now—He knows how she admires you, and—

Sir Fretful. O Lord, I am sure Mr Sneer has more taste and sincerity than to—A damn'd double-faced fellow!

[*Aside.*]

Dangle. Yes, yes,—Sneer will jest—but a better humoured—

Sir Fretful. O, I know—

Dangle. He has a ready turn for ridicule—his wit costs him nothing.—

Sir Fretful. No, egad;—or I should wonder how he came by it.

[*Aside.*]

Mrs Dangle. Because his jest is always at the expence of his friend.

Dangle. But, Sir Fretful, have you sent your p'lay to the

the managers yet?—or can I can be of any service to you?

Sir Fretful. No, no, I thank you; I believe the piece had sufficient recommendation with it.—I thank you tho'—I sent it to the manager of COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE this morning.

Sneer. I should have thought now, that it might have been cast (as the actors call it) better at DRURY-LANE.

Sir Fretful. O lud! no—never send a play there while I live—harkee! [*Whispers Sneer.*]

Sneer. *Writes himself!*—I know he does—

Sir Fretful. I say nothing—I take away from no man's merit—am hurt at no man's good fortune—I say nothing—But this I will say—through all my knowledge of life, I have observed—that there is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy!

Sneer. I believe you have reason for what you say, indeed.

Sir Fretful. Besides—I can tell you it is not always so safe to leave a play in the hands of those who write themselves.

Sneer. What, they may steal from them, hey, my dear Plagiary?

Sir Fretful. Steal! to be sure they may; and, egad, serve your best thoughts as gypsies do stolen children, disfigure them to make 'em pass for their own.

Sneer. But your present work is a sacrifice to Melpomene, and HE you know never—

Sir Fretful. That's no security.—A dext'rous plagiarist may do any thing.—Why, Sir, for ought I know, he might take out some of the best things in my tragedy, and put them into his own comedy.

Sneer. That might be done, I dare be sworn.

Sir Fretful. And then, if such a person gives you the least hint or assistance, he is devilish apt to take the merit of the whole.—

Dangle. If it succeeds.

Sir Fretful. Aye,—but with regard to this piece, I think I can hit that gentleman, for I can safely swear he never read it.

Sneer.

Sneer. I'll tell you how you may hurt him more—

Sir Fretful. How?—

Sneer. Swear he wrote it.

Sir Fretful. Plague on't now *Sneer*, I shall take it ill.—I believe you want to take away my character as an author!

Sneer. Then I am sure you ought to be very much obliged to me.

Sir Fretful. Hey! Sir!—

Dangle. O you know, he never means what he says.

Sir Fretful. Sincerely then—you do like the piece?

Sneer. Wonderfully!

Sir Fretful. But come now, there must be something that you think might be might be mended, hey?—Mr *Dangle*, has nothing struck you?

Dangle. Why faith, it is but an ungracious thing for the most part to—

Sir Fretful. —With most authors it is just so indeed they are in general strangely tenacious!—But, for my part, I am never so well pleased as when a judicious critic points out any defect to me; for what is the purpose of shewing a work to a friend, if you don't mean to profit by his opinion?

Sneer. Very true.—Why then tho' I seriously admire the piece upon the whole, yet there is one small objection; which, if you'll give me leave, I'll mention.

Sir Fretful. Sir, you can't oblige me more.

Sneer. I think it wants incident.

Sir Fretful. Good God!—you surprise me!—wants incident!—

Sneer. Yes; I own I think the incidents are too few.

Sir Fretful. Good God! Believe me, Mr *Sneer*, there is no person for whose judgment I have a more implicit deference.—But I protest to you, Mr *Sneer*, I am only apprehensive that the incidents are too crowded.—My dear *Dangle*, how does it strike you?

Dangle. Really I can't agree with my friend *Sneer*.—I think the plot quite sufficient; and the four first acts by many degrees the best I ever read or saw in my life. If

I might venture to suggest any thing, it is that the interest rather falls off in the fifth.—

Sir Fretful. —Rises; I believe you mean, Sir.

Dangle. No; I don't upon my word.

Sir Fretful. Yes, yes, you do upon my soul—it certainly don't fall off, I assure you—No, no, it don't fall off.

Dangle. Now, Mrs Dangle, didn't you say it struck you in the same light?

Mrs Dangle. No, indeed, I did not—I did not see a fault in any part of the play from the beginning to the end.

Sir Fretful. Upon my soul the women are the best judges after all!

Mrs Dangle. Or if I made any objection, I am sure it was to nothing in the piece; but that I was afraid it was, on the whole, a little too long.

Sir Fretful. Pray, Madam, do you speak as to duration of time; or do you mean that the story is tediously spun out?

Mrs Dangle. O Lud! no.—I speak only with reference to the usual length of acting plays.

Sir Fretful. Then I am very happy—very happy indeed—because the play is a short play, a remarkably short play: I should not venture to differ with a lady on a point of taste; but, on these occasions, the watch, you know, is the critic.

Mrs Dangle. Then, I suppose, it must have been Mr Dangle's drawling manner of reading it to me.

Sir Fretful. O, if Mr Dangle read it! that's quite another affair!—But I assure you, Mrs Dangle, the first evening you can spare me three hours and a half, I'll undertake to read you the whole from beginning to end, with the Prologue and Epilogue, and allow time for the music between the acts.

Mrs Dangle. I hope to see it on the stage next.—

Dangle. Well, Sir Fretful, I wish you may be able to get rid as easily of the news-paper criticisms as you do of ours.—

Sir Fretful. The NEWS-PAPERS!—Sir, they are the most villainous—licentious—abominable—infernal—Not
tha

that I ever read them—No—I make it a rule never to look into a news-paper.

Dangle. You are quite right—for it certainly must hurt an author of delicate feelings to see the liberties they take.

Sir Fretful. No!—quite the contrary; their abuse is, in fact, the best panegyric—I like it of all things.—An author's reputation is only in danger from their support.

Mr Sneer. Why that's true—and that attack now on you the other day—

Sir Fretful. —What? where?

Dangle. Aye, you mean in a paper of Thursday; it was completely ill-natur'd to be sure.

Sir Fretful. O, so much the better—Ha! ha! ha! —I wou'dn't have it otherwise.

Dangle. Certainly it is only to be laugh'd at; for—

Sir Fretful. —You don't happen to recollect what the fellow said, do you?

Sneer. Pray, Dangle—Sir Fretful seems a little anxious—

Sir Fretful. —O lud, no!—anxious,—not I, not the least—I—But one may as well hear you know.

Dangle. Sneer do you recollect? make out something.

[*Aside.*

Sneer. I will, [*to Dangle.*—Yes, yes, I remember perfectly.

Sir Fretful. Well, and pray now—Not that it signifies—what might the gentleman say?

Sneer. Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention, or original genius whatever; tho' you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

Sir Fretful. Ha! ha! ha!—very good!

Sneer. That as to comedy, you have not one idea of your own, he believes, even in your common place book—where stray jokes, and pilfered witticisms are kept with as much method as the ledger of the lost-and-stolen-office.

Sir Fretful. Ha! ha! ha!—very pleasant!

Sneer. Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to steal with taste:—But that you glean

B. 2.

from

from the refuse of obscure volumes, where more judicious plagiarists have been before you; so that the body of your work is a composition of dregs and sediments—like a bad tavern's worst wine.

Sir Fretful. Ha! ha!

Sneer. In your more serious efforts, he says, your bombast would be less intolerable, if the thoughts were ever suited to the expression; but the homeliness of the sentiment stares thro' the fantastic encumbrance of it's fine language, like a clown in one of the new uniforms!

Sir Fretful. Ha! ha!

Sneer. That your occasional tropes and flowers suit the general coarseness of your style, as tambour sprigs would a ground of linsley-wolfsey; while your imitations of Shakespeare resemble the mimicry of Falstaff's Page, and are about as near the standard of the original.

Sir Fretful. Ha!—

Sneer.—In short, that even the finest passages you steal are of no service to you; for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating; so that they lie on the surface like lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilize.—

Sir Fretful. (*after great agitation.*)—Now another person would be vex'd at this.

Sneer. Oh! but I wou'd'nt have told you, only to divert you.

Sir Fretful. I know it—I *am* diverted,—Ha! ha! ha!—not the least invention!—Ha! ha! ha! very good!—very good!

Sneer. Yes—no genius! Ha! ha! ha!

Dangle. A severe rogue! Ha! ha! ha! But you are quite right, Sir Fretful, never to read such nonsense.

Sir Fretful. To be sure—for if there is any thing to one's praise, it is a foolish vanity to be gratified at it, and if it is abuse,—why one is always sure to hear of it from one damn'd good natured friend or another!

Enter SERVANT.

Sir, there is an Italian gentleman with a French interpreter, and three young ladies, and a dozen musicians, who

who say they are sent by Lady Rondeau and Mrs Fuge.

Dangle. Gadso! they come by appointment. Dear Mrs Dangle do let them know I'll see them directly.

Mrs Dangle. You know, Mr Dangle, I shan't understand a word they say.

Dangle. But you hear there's an interpreter.

Mrs Dangle. Well, I'll try to endure their complaisance till you come. [Exit.]

Serv. And Mr Puff, Sir, has sent word that the last rehearsal is to be this morning, and that he'll call on you presently.

Dangle. That's true—I shall certainly be at home. [Exit Servant.] Now, Sir Fretful, if you have a mind to have justice done you in the way of answer—Egad, Mr Puff's your man.

Sir Fretful. Pshaw! Sir, why should I wish to have it answered, when I tell you I am pleased at it?

Dangle. True, I had forgot that.—But I hope you are not fretted at what Mr Sneeer—

Sir Fretful.—Zounds! no, Mr Dangle, don't I tell you these things never fret me in the least.

Dangle. Nay, I only thought—

Sir Fretful.—And let me tell you, Mr Dangle, 'tis damn'd affronting in you to suppose that I am hurt, when I tell you I am not.

Sneeer. But why so warm, Sir Fretful?

Sir Fretful. Gadslife! Mr Sneeer, you are as absurd as Dangle; how often must I repeat it to you, that nothing can vex me but your supposing it possible for me to mind the damn'd nonsense you have been repeating to me!—and let me tell you, if you continue to believe this, you must mean to insult me, gentlemen—and then your disrespect will affect me no more than the newspaper criticisms—and I shall treat it—with exactly the same calm indifference and philosophic contempt—and so your servant. [Exit.]

Sneeer. Ha! ha! ha! Poor Sir Fretful! Now will he go and vent his philosophy in anonymous abuse of all modern critics and authors—But, Dangle, you must get your friend Puff to take me to the rehearsal of his tragedy.

B. 3.

Dangle.

Dangle. I'll answer for't, he'll thank you for desiring it. But come and help me to judge of this musical family; they are recommended by people of consequence, I assure you.

Sneer. I am at your disposal the whole morning—but I thought you had been a decided critic in music, as well as in literature.

Dangle. So I am—but I have a bad ear.—Esaith, Sneer, though I am afraid we were a little too severe on Sir Fretful—tho' he is my friend.

Sneer. Why, 'tis certain, that unnecessarily to mortify the vanity of any writer, is a cruelty which mere dulness never can deserve; but where a base and personal malignity usurps the place of literary emulation, the aggressor deserves neither quarter nor pity.

Dangle. That's true egad!—tho' he's my friend.

SCENE II.

A Drawing Room, Hartficberd, &c. Italian Family, French Interpreter, Mrs Dangle and Servants discovered.

Inter. Je dis madame, ja'i l'honneur to introduce & de vous demander votre protection pour le Signor Patticcio Retornello & pour sa charmante famille.

Sig. Past. Ah! Vossignoria noi vi preghiamo di favorirvi colla vostra protezione.

1st Daughter. Vossignora fatevi questi grazie.

2d Daughter. Si Signora.

Inter. Madame—*me interpret.*—C'est à dire—in English—qu'ils vous prient de leur faire l'honneur—

Mrs Dangle. —I say again, gentlemen, I don't understand a word you say.

Sig. Past. Questo Signore spiegherò.

Inter. Oui—*me interpret.*—nous avons les lettres de recommandation pour Monsieur Dangle de —

Mrs Dangle. —Upon my word, Sir, I don't understand you.

Sig. Past. La Co testa Rondeau e nostra padrona.

3d Daughter. Si, padre, & mi Ladi Fuge.

Inter. O!—*me interpret.*—Madame, ils disent—in English—Qu'ils ont l'honneur d'être proteges de ces Dames.
—*You understand?*

Mrs Dangle. No, Sir,—no understand!

Enter DANGLE and SNEER.

Inter. Ah voici Monsieur Dangle!

All Italians. A! Signor Dangle!

Mrs Dangle. Mr Dangle, here are two very civil gentlemen trying to make themselves understood, and I don't know which is the interpreter.

Dangle. E bien.

Inter. Monsieur Dangle—le grand bruit de vos talents pour la critique & de votre interest avec Messieurs les Directeurs a tous les Theatres.

Sig. Past. Vosignoria slete si famoso par la vostra conokensa e vostra interressa colla le Direttore da—

Speaking together.

Dangle. Egad I think the Interpreter is the hardest to be understood of the two!

Sneer. Why I thought Dangle, you had been an admirable linguist!

Dangle. So I am, if they would not talk so damn'd fast.

Sneer. Well I'll explain that—the less time we lose in hearing them the better,—for that I suppose is what they are brought here for.

Sneer speaks to Sig. Past.—*They sing trios. &c.* Dangle beating out of time. Servant enters and whispers Dangle.]

Dangle. Shew him up. [Exit Servant.

Bravo! admirable! bravissimo! admirabilissimo!—Ahl Sneer, where will you find such as these voices in England.

Sneer. Not easily.

Dangle. But Puff is coming.—Signor and little Signora's—obbligatissimo!—Spofa Signora Dangelena—Mrs

Dangle, shall I beg you to offer them some refreshments, and take their address in the next room?

[Exit Mrs Dangle with the Italians and Interpreter ceremoniously.]

Re-enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mr Puff, Sir!

Dangle. My dear Puff!

Enter PUFF.

Puff. My dear Dangle, how is it with you?

Dangle. Mr Sneer, give me leave to introduce Mr Puff to you.

Puff. Mr Saeer is this? Sir, he is a gentleman whom I have long panted for the honour of knowing—a gentleman whose critical talents and transcendant judgment—

Sneer. —Dear Sir—

Dangle. Nay, don't be modest, Sneer, my friend Puff only talks to you in the stile of his profession.

Sneer. His profession!

Puff. Yes, Sir; I make no secret of the trade I follow—among friends and brother authors, Dangle knows I love to be frank on the subject, and to advertise myself *vivâ voce*.—I am, Sir, a Practitioner in Panegyric, or, to speak more plainly—a Professor of the Art of Puffing, at your service—or any body else's.

Sneer. Sir, you are very obliging!—I believe, Mr Puff, I have often admired your talents in the daily prints.

Puff. Yes, Sir, I flatter myself I do as much business in that way as any six of the fraternity in town—Devilish hard work all the summer—Friend Dangle! never work'd harder!—But harkee,—the Winter Managers were a little sore I believe.

Dangle. No—I believe they took it all in good part.

Puff. Aye!—Then that must have been affectation in them; for egad, there were some of the attacks which there was no laughing at!

Sneer. Aye, the humorous ones.—But I should think Mr Puff, that Authors would in general be able to do this sort of work for themselves.

Puff.

Puff. Why yes—but in a clumsy way.—Besides, we look on that as an encroachment, and so take the opposite side.—I dare say now you conceive half the very civil paragraphs and advertisements you see, to be written by the parties concerned, or their friends?—No such thing—Nine out of ten, manufactured by me in the way of business.

Sneer. Indeed!—

Puff. Even the Auctioneers now—the Auctioneers I say, tho' the rogues have lately got some credit for their language—not an article of the merit their's!—take them out of their pulpits and they are as dull as Catalogues.—No, Sir;—'twas I first enrich'd their style—'twas I first taught them to crowd their advertisements with pænegyric superlatives, each epithet rising above the other—like the Bidders in their own Auction-rooms! From me they learn'd to inlay their phraseology with variegated chips of exotic metaphor: by me too their inventive faculties were called forth.—Yes Sir, by me they were instructed to clothe the ideal walls with gratuitous fruits—to insinuate obsequious rivulets into visionary groves—to teach courteous shrubs to nod their approbation of the grateful soil; or on emergencies to raise upstart oaks, where there never had been an acorn; to create a delightful vicinage without the assistance of a neighbour; or fix the temple of Hygeia in the fens of Lincolnshire!

Dangle. I am sure you have done them infinite service; for now, when a gentleman is ruined, he parts with his house with some credit.

Sneer. Service! if they had any gratitude, they would erect a statue to him; they would figure him as a presiding Mercury, the god of traffic and fiction, with a hammer in his hand instead of a caduceus.—But pray, Mr Puff, what first put you on exercising your talents in this way?

Puff. Egad, Sir,—sheer necessity—the proper parent of an art so nearly allied to invention: you must know, Mr Sneer, that from the first time I tried my hand at an advertisement, my success was such, that for some time after, I led a most extraordinary life indeed!

Sneer.

Sneer. How, pray?

Puff. Sir, I supported myself two years entirely by my misfortunes.

Sneer. By your misfortunes.

Puff. Yes, Sir, assisted by long sickness, and other occasional disorders; and a very comfortable living I had of it.

Sneer. From sickness and misfortunes! You practised as a Doctor, and an Attorney at once?

Puff. No egad, both maladies and miseries were my own.

Sneer. Hey!—what the plague!

Dangle. 'Tis true, efaith.

Puff. Harkee!—By advertisements—"To the charitable and humane!" and "to those whom Providence hath blessed with affluence!"

Sneer. Oh,—I understand you.

Puff. And, in truth, I deserved what I got; for I suppose never man went through such a series of calamities in the same space of time!—Sir, I was five times made a bankrupt, and reduced from a state of affluence, by a train of unavoidable misfortunes! then, Sir, though a very industrious tradesman, I was twice burnt out, and lost my little all both times!—I lived upon those fires a month.—I soon after was confined by a most excruciating disorder, and lost the use of my limbs!—That told very well; for I had the case strongly attested, and went about to collect the subscriptions myself.

Dangle. Egad, I believe that was when you first called on me.—

Puff.—In November last?—O no!—I was at that time a close prisoner in the Marshalsea, for a debt benevolently contracted to serve a friend!—I was afterwards twice tapped for a dropsy, which declined into a very profitable consumption!—I was then reduced to—O no—then I became a widow with six helpless children,—after having had eleven husbands pressed, and being left every time eight months gone with child, and without money to get me into an hospital!

Sneer.

Sneer. And you bore all with patience, I make no doubt!

Puff. Why, yes,—tho' I made some occasional attempts at *felo de se*; but as I did not find those *rash actions* answer, I left off killing myself very soon.—Well, Sir,—at last, what with bankruptcies, fires, gout, dropsies, imprisonments, and other valuable calamities, having got together a pretty handsome sum, I determined to quit a business which had always gone rather against my conscience, and in a more liberal way still to indulge my talents for fiction and embellishment, through my favourite channels of diurnal communication—and so, Sir, you have my history.

Sneer. Most obligingly communicative indeed; and your confession, if published, might certainly serve the cause of true charity, by rescuing the most useful channels of appeal to benevolence from the cant of imposition.—But surely, Mr Puff, there is no great *mystery* in your present profession?

Puff. Mystery! Sir, I will take upon me to say, the matter was never scientifically treated, nor reduced to rule before.

Sneer. Reduced to rule?

Puff. O lud, Sir! you are very ignorant, I am afraid.—Yes Sir,—Puffing is of various sorts—the principal are, The Puff direct—the Puff preliminary—the Puff collateral—the Puff collusive, and the Puff oblique, or Puff by implication.—These all assume, as circumstances require, the various forms of Letter to the Editor—Occasional Anecdote—Impartial Critique—Observation from Correspondent—or Advertisement from the Party.

Sneer. The Puff direct, I can conceive—

Puff. O yes, that's simple enough,—for instance—A new Comedy or Farce is to be produced at one of the Theatres (though, by the bye, they don't bring out half what they ought to do.) The author, suppose Mr Smatter, or Mr Dapper—or any particular friend of mine—very well; the day before it is to be performed, I write an account of the manner in which it was received—I have the plot from the author,—and only add—Charac-

ters

Sneer.

ters strongly drawn—highly coloured—hand of a master—fund of genuine humour—mine of invention—neat dialogue—attic salt ! Then for the performance—Mr Dodd was astonishingly great in the character of Sir Harry ! That universal and judicious actor, Mr Palmer, perhaps never appeared to more advantage than in the Colonel ; —but it is not in the power of language to do justice to Mr King !—Indeed he more than merited those repeated bursts of applause which he drew from a most brilliant and judicious audience ! As to the scenery—The miraculous power of Mr de Louthembourg's pencil are universally acknowledged !—In short, we are at a loss which to admire most,—the unrivalled genius of the author, the great attention and liberality of the managers—the wonderful abilities of the painter, or the incredible exertions of all the performers !—

Sneer. That's pretty well indeed, Sir.

Puff. O cool—quite cool—to what I sometimes do.

Sneer. And do you think there are any who are influenced by this ?

Puff. O, lud ! yes, Sir ; the number of those who undergo the fatigue of judging for themselves is very small indeed !

Sneer. Well, Sir,—the Puff preliminary ?

Puff. O that, Sir, does well in the form of a *Caution*.—in a matter of gallantry now—Sir Flimsy Gossimer, wishes to be well with Lady Fanny Fete—He applies to me—I open trenches for him with a paragraph in the Morning Post.—It is recommended to the beautiful and accomplished Lady F four stars F dash E to be on her guard against that dangerous character, Sir F dash G ; who, however pleasing and insinuating his manners may be, is certainly not remarkable for the *constancy of his attachments* !—in Italics.—Here you see, Sir Flimsy Gossimer is introduced to the particular notice of Lady Fanny—who, perhaps never thought of him before—she finds herself publicly cautioned to avoid him, which naturally makes her desirous of seeing him ;—the observation of their acquaintance causes a pretty kind of mutual embarrassment, this produces a sort of sympathy of interest

interest—which, if Sir Flimsy is unable to improve effectually, he at least gains the credit of having their names mentioned together, by a particular set, and in a particular way,—which, nine times out of ten, is the full accomplishment of modern gallantry?

Dangle. Egad, Sneer, you will be quite an adept in the business.

Puff. Now, Sir, the Puff Collateral is much used as an appendage to advertisements, and may take the form of anecdote.—Yesterday as the celebrated George Bon Mot was sauntering down St James's street, he met the lively Lady Mary Myrtle, coming out of the Park,—‘Good God, Lady Mary, I’m surpris’d to meet you in a white jacket,—for I expected never to have seen you but in a full trimmed uniform and a light-horseman’s cap!—“Heavens, George, where could you have learned that?”—‘Why, replied the wit, I just saw a print of you in a new publication called the Camp Magazine, which by the bye, is a devilish clever thing,—and is sold at No. 3, on the right-hand of the way, two doors from the printing-office, the corner of Ivy-lane, Paternoster-row, price only one shilling!’

Sneer. Very ingenious indeed.

Puff. But the Puff Collusive is the newest of any; for it acts in the disguise of determined hostility.—It is much used by bold booksellers and enterprising poets.—An indignant correspondent observes—that the new poem called Beelzebub’s Cotillion, or Proserpine’s Fete Champetre, is one of the most unjustifiable performances he ever read! The severity with which certain characters are handled is quite shocking! And as there are many descriptions in it too warmly coloured for female delicacy, the shameful avidity with which this piece is bought by all people of fashion, is a reproach on the taste of the times, and a disgrace to the delicacy of the age!—Here you see the two strongest inducements are held forth;—First, that nobody ought to read it;—and secondly, that every body buys it; on the strength of which, the publisher boldly prints the tenth edition, before he has sold ten of the first; and then establishes it by threatening

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him-

himself with the pillory, or absolutely indicting himself for Scan. Mag.!

Dangle. Ha! ha! ha!—'egad I know it is so.

Puff. As to the Puff oblique, or Puff by implication, it is too various and extensive to be illustrated by an instance;—it attracts in titles and presumes in patents; it lurks in the *limitation* of a subscription, and invites in the assurance of croud and incomodation at public places; it delights to draw forth concealed merit, with a most disinterested assiduity; and sometimes wears a countenance of smiling censure and tender reproach.—It has a wonderful memory for Parliamentary Debates, and will often give the whole speech of a favoured member with the most flattering accuracy. But, above all, it is a great dealer in reports and suppositions. It has the earliest intelligence of intended preferments that will reflect *honour* on the *patrons*; and embryo promotions of modest gentlemen—who know nothing of the matter themselves. It can hint a ribband for implied services, in the air of a common report; and with the carelessness of a casual paragraph, suggest officers into commands—to which they have no pretension but their wishes. This Sir, is the last principal class. of the Art of Puffing—An art which I hope you will now agree with me, is of the highest dignity—yielding a tablature of benevolence and public spirit; befriending equally trade, gallantry, criticism, and politics:—the applause of genius! the register of charity! the triumph of heroism! the self-defence of contractors! the fame of orators!—and the gazette of ministers!

Sneer. Sir, I am completely a convert both to the importance and ingenuity of your profession; and now, Sir, there is but one thing which can possibly encrease my respect for you, and that is, your permitting me to be present this morning at the rehearsal of your new tragedy—

Puff.—Hush, for heaven's sake.—*My* tragedy!—'Egad, Dangle, I take this very ill—you know how apprehensive I am of being known to be the author.

Dangle. 'Efaith I would not have told—but it's in the papers, and your name at length—in the Morning Chronicle.

Puff

Puff. Ah! those damn'd editors never can keep a secret!—Well, Mr Sacer—no doubt you will do me great honour—I shall be infinitely happy—highly flattered.

Dangle. I believe it must be near the time—shall we go together?

Puff. No; It will not be yet this hour, for they are always late at that theatre; besides, I must meet you there, for I have some little matters here to send to the papers, and a few paragraphs to scribble before I go.

[*Looking at memorandums.*]

—Here is 'a conscientious Baker, on the Subject of the Army Bread;' and 'a Detester of visible brick-work, in favour of the new invented stucco; both in the style of Junius, and promised for to-morrow.—The Thames navigation too is at a stand.—Misomud or Anti-shoal must go to work again directly.—Here too are some political memorandums I see; aye—To take Paul Jones, and get the Indiamen out of the Shannon—reinforce Byron—compel the Dutch to— so!—I must do that in the evening papers, or reserve it for the Morning Herald, for I know that I have undertaken to-morrow; besides, to establish the unanimity of the fleet in the Public Advertiser, and to shoot Charles Fox in the Morning Post.— So, egad I ha'n't a moment to lose!

Dangle. Well! we'll meet in the Green Room.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

END OF ACT I.

C 2.

Puff

A C T . II.

SCENE I.

*The Theatre.**Enter DANGLE, PUFF, and SNEER, as before the Curtain.*

Puff. NO, no, Sir; what Shakespeare says of Actors may be better applied to the purpose of Plays; *they* ought to be 'the abstract and brief Chronicles of the times.' Therefore when history, and particularly the history of our own country, furnishes any thing like a case in point, to the time in which an author writes, if he knows his own interest, he will take advantage of it; so Sir, I call my tragedy *The Spanish Armada*; and have laid the scene before *Tilbury Fort*.

Sneer. A most happy thought certainly!

Dangle. Egad it was—I told you so.—But pray now I don't understand how you have contrived to introduce any love into it.

Puff. Love!—Oh! nothing so easy; for it is a received point among poets, that where history gives you a good heroic outline for a play, you may fill up with a little love at your own discretion: in doing which, nine times out of ten, you only make up a deficiency in the private history of the times. Now I rather think I have done this with some success.

Sneer. No scandal about *Queen Elizabeth*, I hope?

Puff. O Lud! no, no,—I only suppose the Governor of *Tilbury Fort's* daughter to be in love with the son of the *Spanish Admiral*.

Sneer. Oh, is that all?

Dangle.

Dangle. Excellent, Efaith!—I see it at once.—But won't this appear rather improbable?

Puff. To be sure it will—but what the plague! a play is not to show occurrences that happen every day, but things just so strange, that tho' they never *did*, they might happen.

Sneer. Certainly nothing is unnatural, that is not physically impossible.

Puff. Very true—and for that matter Don Ferolo Wiskerandos—for that's the lover's name, might have been over here in the train of the Spanish Ambassador; or Tilburina, for that is the lady's name, might have been in love with him, from having heard his character, or seen his picture; or from knowing that he was the last man in the world she ought to be in love with—or for any other good female reason.—However, Sir, the fact is, that tho' she is but a Knight's daughter, egad! she is in love like any Princess!

Dangle. Poor young lady! I feel for her already! for I can conceive how great the conflict must be between her passion and her duty; her love for her country, and her love for Don Ferolo Wiskerandos!

Puff. O amazing!—her poor susceptible heart is swayed to and fro, by contending passions like—

Enter UNDER PROMPTER.

Under Promp. Sir, the scene is set, and every thing is ready to begin if you please.—

Puff. 'Egad; then we'll lose no time.

Under Promp. Tho' I believe, Sir, you will find it very very short; for all the performers have profited by the kind permission you granted them.

Puff. Hey! what!

Under Promp. You know, Sir, you gave them leave to cut out or omit whatever they found heavy or unnecessary to the plot, and I must own they have taken very liberal advantage of your indulgence.

Puff. Well, well.—They are in general very good judges; and I know I am luxuriant.—Now, Mr Hopkins, as soon as you please.

Under Prompter to the music. Gentlemen, will you play a few bars of something, just to—

Puff. Aye, that's right,—for as we have the scenes, and dresses, egad, we'll go to't, as if it was the first night's performance;—but you need not mind stopping between the acts. *[Exit Under Prompter.*

(Orchestra play. Then the Bell rings.)

Soh! stand clear gentlemen.—Now you know there will be a cry of down!—down!—hats off!—silence!—silence!—Then up the curtain,—and let us see what our painters have done for us.

SCENE II.

The Curtain rises and discovers Tilbury Fort.

Two Centinels asleep.

Dangle. Tilbury Fort!—very fine indeed!

Puff. Now, what do you think I open with?

Sneer. Faith, I can't guess—

Puff. A clock—Hark!—*(clock strikes.)* I open with a clock striking, to beget an awful attention in the audience—it also marks the time, which is four o'clock in the morning, and saves a description of the rising sun, and a great deal about gilding the eastern hemisphere.

Dangle. But pray, are the centinels to be asleep?

Puff. Fast as watchmen.

Sneer. Is'nt that odd, tho' at such an alarming crisis?

Puff. To be sure it is,—but smaller things must give way to a striking scene at the opening; that's a rule.—And the case is, that two great men are coming to this very spot to begin the piece; now, it is not to be supposed they would open their lips, if these fellows were watching them; so, egad, I must either have sent them off their posts, or set them asleep.

Sneer. O that accounts for it!—But tell us, who are these coming?—

Puff. They are they—Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Christopher Hatton.—You'll know Sir Christopher, by his

his turning out his toes—famous, you know, for his dancing. I like to preserve all the little traits of character.—Now attend.

Enter SIR WALTER RALEIGH and SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON.

" *Sir Chris.* True, gallant Raleigh!—

Dangle. What, they had been talking before?

Puff. O yes; all the way as they came along.—I beg pardon gentlemen, [*to the Actors*] but these are particular friends of mine, whose remarks may be of great service to us.—Don't mind interrupting them whenever any thing strikes you. [*To Snee and Dangle.*]

" *Sir Chris.* True, gallant Raleigh!

" But O, thou champion of thy country's fame,

" There is a question which I yet must ask;

" A question which I never ask'd before—

" What mean these mighty armamepts?

" This general muster? and this throng of chiefs?

Snee. Pray, Mr Puff, how came Sir Christopher Hatton never to ask that question before?

Puff. What, before the play began? how the plague could he?

Dangle. That's true efaith!

Puff. But you will hear what he thinks of the matter.

" *Sir Chris.* Alas, my noble friend, when I behold

" You tented plains in martial symmetry

" Array'd—When I count o'er yon glittering lines

" Of crested warriors, where the proud steeds neigh,

" And valor-breathing trumpet's shrill appeal,

" Responsive vibrate on my list'ning ear;

" When virgin majesty herself I view,

" Like her protecting Pallas veil'd in steel,

" With graceful confidence exhort to arms!

" When briefly all I hear or see bears stamp

" Of martial vigilance, and stern defence,

" I cannot but surmise.—Forgive, my friend,

" If the conjecture's rash.—I cannot but

" Surmise.—The state some danger apprehends!

Snee. A very cautious conjecture that.

Puff,

Puff. Yes, that's his character ; not to give an opinion, but on secure grounds—now then.

“ *Sir Walter.* O, most accomplished Christopher.——

Puff. He calls him by his christian name, to show that they are on the most familiar terms.

“ *Sir Walter.* O most accomplished Christopher, I find

“ Thy staunch sagacity still tracks the future,

“ In the fresh print of the o’ertaken past.

Puff. Figurative!

“ *Sir Walter.* Thy fears are just.

“ *Sir Chris.* But where? whence? when? and what

“ The danger is——Methinks I fain would learn.

“ *Sir Walter.* You know, my friend, scarce two re-

“ volving suns,

“ And three revolving moons, have clos’d their course

“ Since haughty Philip, in despite of peace,

“ With hostile hand hath struck at England’s trade.

“ *Sir Chris.* I know it well.

“ *Sir Walter.* Philip you know is proud, Iberia’s king!

“ *Sir Chris.* He is.

“ *Sir Walter.* —— His subjects in base bigotry

“ And Catholic oppression held,——while we

“ You know, the protestant persuasion hold.

“ *Sir Chris.* We do.

“ *Sir Walter.* You know besides,——his boasted ar-

“ mament,

“ The fam’d armada,——by the Pope baptized,

“ With purpose to invade these realms——

“ *Sir Chris.* ——Is failed,

“ Our last advices so report.

“ *Sir Walter.* While the Iberian Admiral’s chief hope,

“ His darling son——

“ *Sir Chris.* ——Fero! Wiskerandos hight——

“ *Sir Walter.* The same——by chance a pris’ner hath

“ been ta’en,

“ And in this fort of Tilbury——

“ *Sir Chris.* ——Is now

“ Confin’d,—’tis true, and oft from yon tall turrets top

“ I’ve mark’d the youthful Spaniard’s haughty mien

“ Unconquer’d, tho’ in chains ;

“ *Sir*

Puff.

Sneer.

Puff.

of the fo

" *Sir Walter.*

You also know——

Dangle. —Mr Puff, as he *knows* all this, why does Sir Walter go on telling him?

Puff. But the audience are not supposed to know any thing of the matter, are they?

Sneer. True; but I think you manage ill; for there certainly appears no reason why Sir Walter should be so communicative.

Puff. For, egad now, that is one of the most ungrateful observations I ever heard—for the less inducement he has to tell all this, the more I think you ought to be oblig'd to him; for I am sure you'd know nothing of the matter without it.

Dangle. That's very true, upon my word.

Puff. But you will find he was *not* going on.

" *Sir Chris.* Enough, enough,—'tis plain—and I no more

" Am in amazement lost!——

Puff. Here, now you see, Sir Christopher did not in fact ask any one question for his own information.

Sneer. No indeed:—his has been a most disinterested curiosity!

Dangle. Really, I find, we are very much obliged to them both.

Puff. To be sure you are. Now then for the Commander in Chief, the Earl of Leicester! who, you know, was no favourite but of the Queen's.—We left off—'in amazement lost!'

" *Sir Chris.* Am in amazement lost.——

" But, see where noble Leicester comes! supreme

" In honours and command.

" *Sir Walter.* And yet methinks,

" At such a time, so perilous, so fear'd

" That staff might well become an abler grasp.

" *Sir Chris.* And so, by heav'n, think I! but soft,

" he's here!

Puff. Aye, they envy him.

Sneer. But who are these with him?

Puff. O! very valiant knights; one is the governor of the fort, the other the master of the horse.—And now,
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I think you shall hear some better language : I was obliged to be plain and intelligible in the first scene, because there was so much matter of fact in it ; but now, efaieth, you have trope, figure, and metaphor, as plenty as noun-substantives.

Enter EARL OF LEICESTER, *the Governor, and others.*

" *Leicester.* How's this my friends ? is't thus your
" new fledg'd zeal

" And plumed valor moulds in roosted sloth ?

" Why dimly glimmers that heroic flame,

" Whose red'ning blaze by patriot spirit fed,

" Should be the beacon of a kindling realm ?

" Can the quick current of a patriot heart,

" Thus stagnate in a cold and weedy converse,

" Or freeze in tideless inactivity ?

" No ! rather let the fountain of your valor

" Spring thro' each stream of enterprize,

" Each petty channel of conducive daring,

" Till the full torrent of your foaming wrath

" O'erwhelm the flats of sunk hostility !

Puff. There it is,—follow'd up !

" *Sir Walter.* No more ! the fresh'ning breath of
" thy rebuke

" Hath fill'd the swelling canvass of our souls !

" And thus, tho' fate should cut the cable of

[*All take hands.*]

" Our topmost hopes, in friendship's closing line

" We'll grapple with despair, and if we fall,

" We'll fall in Glory's wake !

" *Leicester.* There spoke Old England's genius !

" 'Then, are we all resolv'd !

" *All.* We are—all resolv'd.

" *Leicester.* To conquer—or be free !

" *All.* To conquer, or be free.

" *Leicester.* All !

" *All.* All.

Dangle. Nem. con. egad !

Puff. O yes, where they *do* agree on the stage, their unanimity is wonderful !

" *Leicester.*

" *Leicester*. Then, let us embrace—and now—

Sneer. What the plague, is he going to pray?

Puff. Yes, hush!—in great emergencies, there is nothing like a prayer!

" *Leicester*. O mighty Mars!

Dangle. But why should he pray to *Mars*?

Puff. Hush!

" *Leicester*. If in thy homage bred,

" Each point of discipline I've still observ'd;

" Nor but by due promotion, and the right

" Of service, to the rank of Major-General

" Have ris'n; assist thy votary now!

" *Governor*. Yet do not rise,—hear me!

" *Master of Horse*. And me!

" *Knight*. And me!

" *Sir Walter*. And me!

" *Sir Christopher*. And me!

Puff. Now, pray all together.

" *All*. Behold thy votaries submissive beg,

" That thou wilt deign to grant them all they ask;

" Assist them to accomplish all their ends,

" And sanctify whatever means they use

" To gain them!

Sneer. A very orthodox quintetto!

Puff. Vastly well, gentlemen.—Is that well managed, or not? Have you such a prayer as that on the stage?

Sneer. Not exactly.

Leicester to Puff. But, Sir, you haven't settled how we are to get off here.

Puff. You could not go off kneeling, could you?

Sir Walter to Puff. O no, Sir! impossible!

Puff. It would have a good effect & faith, if you could! exeunt praying!—Yes, and would vary the established mode of springing off with a glance at the pit.

Sneer. O never mind, so as you get them off, I'll answer for it the audience won't care how.

Puff. Well then, repeat the last line standing, and go off the old way.

" *All*. And sanctify whatever means we use to gain

" them.

[*Exeunt*.

Dangle.

" *Leicester*

Dangle. Bravo! a fine exit.

Sneer. Well, really Mr Puff.—

Puff. Stay a moment.—

The CENTINELS get up.

“ 1st Centinel. All this shall to Lord Burleigh’s ear.

“ 2d Centinel. ’Tis meet it should. [*Exeunt Centinels.*

Dangle. Hey! why, I thought those fellows had been asleep?

Puff. Only a pretence, there’s the art of it; they were spies of Lord Burleigh’s.

Sneer. —But isn’t it odd, they were never taken notice of, not even by the commander in chief.

Puff. O lud, Sir, if people who want to listen, or overhear, were not always conniv’d at in a Tragedy, there would be no carrying on any plot in the world.

Dangle. That’s certain!

Puff. But take care, my dear Dangle, the morning gun is going to fire. [*Cannon fires.*]

Dangle. Well, that will have a fine effect.

Puff. I think so, and helps to realize the scene.— [*Cannon twice.*]

What the plague!—three morning guns!—there never is but one!—aye, this is always the way at the Theatre—give these fellows a good thing, and they never know when to have done with it. You have no more cannon to fire?

Prompter from within. No Sir.

Puff. Now then, for soft music.

Sneer. Pray what’s that for?

Puff. It shows that Tilburina is coming; nothing introduces you a heroine like soft music.—Here she comes.

Dangle. And her confidant, I suppose?

Puff. To be sure: here they are—inconsolable to the minuet in Ariadne! *Soft music.*

Enter TILBURINA and CONFIDANT.

“ *Tilburina.* Now has the whispering breath of
“ gentle morn,

“ Bad Nature’s voice, and Nature’s beauty rise;

“ While

" While orient Phœbus with unborrow'd hues,
 " Cloaths the wak'd loveliness which all night slept
 " In heav'nly drapery ! Darkness is fled.
 " Now flowers unfold their beauties to the sun,
 " And blushing, kiss the beam he sends to wake them,
 " The strip'd carnation, and the guarded rose,
 " The vulgar wall-flow'r, and smart gilly-flower,
 " The polyanthus mean--the dapper daizy,
 " Sweet william, and sweet marjorum,--and all
 " The tribe of single and of double pinks !
 " Now too, the feather'd warblers tune their notes
 " Around, and charm the list'ning grove.--The lark !
 " The linnet ! chafinch ! bulfinch ! goldfinch ! green-

" finch

" ---But O to me, no joy can they afford !
 " Nor rose, nor wall-flow'r, nor smart gilly-flower,
 " Nor polyanthus mean, nor dapper daizy,
 " Nor William sweet, nor marjorum--nor lark,
 " Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove !

Puff. Your white handkerchief madam--

Tilburina. I thought, Sir, I was'nt to use that 'till
 ' heart rending woe.'

Puff. O yes madam--at " the finches of the grove,"
 if you please.

" *Tilburina.* " Nor lark,
 " Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove ! [*Weeps.*
Puff. Vastly well madam !

Dangle. Vastly well indeed !

" *Tilburina.* For O too sure, heart rending woe is
 " now

" The lot of wretched *Tilburina* !

Dangle. O !--'tis too much.

Sneer. Oh !--it is indeed.

" *Confidant.* Be comforted sweet lady--for who
 " knows,

" But Heav'n has yet some milk-white day in store.

" *Tilburina.* Alas, my gentle Nora,

" Tender youth, as yet, hath never mourn'd

" Love's fatal dart.--Else wouldst thou know, that

" when

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" The soul is sunk in comfortless despair,

" It cannot taste of merriment.

Dangle. That's certain.

" *Confidant.* But see where your stern father comes ;

" It is not meet that he should find you thus.

Puff. Hey, what the plague !—what a cut is here ?—why, what is become of the description of her first meeting with Don Wiskerandos ? His gallant behaviour in the sea fight, and the simile of the canary bird ?

Tilburina. Indeed Sir, you'll find they will not be miss'd.

Puff. Very well.—Very well !

Tilburina. The cue ma'am if you please.

" *Confidant.* It is not meet that he should find you
" thus.

" *Tilburina.* Thou counsel'st right, but 'tis no easy
" task

" For barefaced grief to wear a mask of joy.

Enter GOVERNOR.

" *Governor.* How's this—in tears ?——O Tilbu-
" rina, shame !

" Is this a time for maudling tenderness,

" And Cupid's baby woes ?——hast thou not heard

" That haughty Spain's Pope-consecrated fleet

" Advances to our shores, while England's fate,

" Like a clipp'd guinea, trembles in the scale !

" *Tilburina.* Then is the crisis of my fate at hand !

" I see the fleet's approach——I see——

Puff. Now, pray gentlemen mind.—This is one of the most useful figures we tragedy writers have, by which a hero or heroine, in consideration of their being often obliged to overlook things that *are* on the stage, is allow'd to hear and see a number of things that are not.

Sneer. Yes—a kind of poetical second-sight !

Puff. Yes—now then madam.

" *Tilburina.* I see their decks

" Are clear'd !——I see the signal made !

" The line is form'd !—a cable's length afunder !

" I see the frigates station'd in the rear ;

" And

" And now, I hear the thunder of the guns !

" I hear the victor's shouts—I also hear

" The vanquish'd groan !—and now 'tis smoke—and

" now

" I see the loose sails shiver in the wind !

" I see—I see—what soon you'll see—

" Governor. Hold daughter ! peace ! this love hath

" turn'd thy brain :

" The Spanish fleet thou *canst* not see—because

" —It is not yet in fight !

Dangle. Egad, tho', the governor seems to make no allowance for this poetical figure you talk of.

Puff. No, a plain matter-of-fact man—that's his character.

" Tilburina. But will you then refuse his offer ?

" Governor. I must—I will—I can—I ought—I do.

" Tilburina. Think what a noble price.

" Governor. No more—you urge in vain.

" Tilburina. His liberty is all he asks.

Sneer. All *who* asks Mr Puff ? Who is—

Puff. Egad, Sir, I can't tell—Here has been such cutting and slashing, I don't know where they have got to myself.

" Tilburina. Indeed Sir you will find it will connect very well.

" —And your reward secure.

Puff. O,—if they had'nt been so devilish free with their cutting here, you would have found that Don Wiskerandos has been tampering for his liberty, and has persuaded Tilburina to make this proposal to her father—and now pray observe the conciseness with which the argument is conducted. Egad, the *pro & con* goes as smart as hits in a fencing match. It is indeed a sort of small sword logic, which we have borrowed from the French.

" Tilburina. A retreat in Spain !

" Governor. Outlawry here !

" Tilburina. Your daughter's prayer !

" Governor. Your father's oath !

" Tilburina. My lover !

D 2.

" Governor.

" And

" Governor. My country !

" *Tilburina*. *Tilburina* !

" Governor. England !

" *Tilburina*. A title !

" Governor. Honour !

" *Tilburina*. A pension !

" Governor. Conscience !

" *Tilburina*. A thousand pounds !

" Governor. Ha ! thou hast touch'd me nearly !

Puff. There you see—she threw in *Tilburina*,
Quick, parry cart with *England* !—Hah ! thrust in twice
a title !—parried by honour.—Hah ! a pension over the
arm !—put by by conscience.—Then flankonade with a
thousand pounds—and a palpable hit egad !

" *Tilburina*. Canst thou—

" Reject the suppliant, and the daughter too ?

" Governor. No more ; I would not hear thee
plead in vain,

" The father softens—but the governor

" Is fix'd !

[*Exit.*

Dangle. Aye, that antithesis of persons—is a most
establish'd figure.

" *Tilburina*. Tis well,—hence then sound hopes,
—fond passion hence ;

" Duty, behold I am all over thine—

" *Wiskerandos without*. Where is my love—my—

" *Tilburina*. Ha !

" *Wiskerandos entering*. My beauteous enemy—

Puff. O dear ma'am, you must start a great deal more
than that ; consider you had just determined in favour of
duty—when in a moment the sound of his voice revives
your passion,—overthrows your resolution, destroys your
obedience.—If you don't express all that in your start—
you do nothing at all.

Tilburina. Well, we'll try again !

Dangle. Speaking from within, has always a fine effect.

Sneer. Very.

" *Wiskerandos*. My conquering *Tilburina* ! How !
is't thus

" We meet ? why are thy looks averse ! what means
" That

" That falling tear—that frown of boding woe?

" Hah! now indeed I am a prisoner!

" Yes, now I feel the galling weight of these—

" Disgraceful chains—which cruel Tilburina!

" Thy doating captive gloried in before.—

" But thou art false, and Wiskerandos is undone!

" *Tilburina.* O no; how little dost thou know thy
Tilburina!

" *Wiskerandos.* Art thou then true? Begone cares,
" doubts, and fears,

" I make you all a present to the winds;

" And if the winds reject you—try the waves.

Puff. The wind you know, is the established receiver
of all stolen sighs, and cast off griefs and apprehensions.

" *Tilburina.* Yet must we part?—stern duty seals
our doom:

" Though here I call yon conscious clouds to witness,

" Could I pursue the bias of my soul,

" All friends, all right of parents I'd disclaim,

" And thou, my Wiskerandos, should'st be father

" And mother, brother, cousin, uncle, aunt,

" And friend to me!

" *Wiskerandos.* O matchless excellence!—and
must we part?

" Well, if—we must—we must—and in that case

" The less is said the better.

Puff. Hey day! here's a cut! What, are all the mu-
tual protestations out?

Tilburina. Now, pray Sir, don't interrupt us just here,
you ruin our feelings.

Puff. Your feelings!—but zounds, my feelings,
ma'am!

Succr. No; pray don't interrupt them.

" *Wiskerandos.* One last embrace—

" *Tilburina.* Now,—farewell, for ever.

" *Wiskerandos.* For ever!

" *Tilburina.* Aye, for ever.

[*Going*

Puff. S'death and fury!—Gad! life! Sir! Madam,
if you go out without the parting look, you might as
well dance out—Here, here!

Confidant. But pray Sir, how am I to get off here?

Puff. You, pshaw! what the devil signifies how you get off! edge away at the top, or where you will—

[*pushes the confidant off*] Now Ma'am you see—

Tilburina. We understand you Sir.

"Aye for ever.

Both. Ohh!— [Turning back and exeunt.

[Scene closes.

Dangle. O charming!

Puff. Hey!—'tis pretty well I believe—you see I don't attempt to strike out any thing new—but I take it I improve on the established modes.

Sneer. You do indeed,—But pray is not Queen Elizabeth to appear?

Puff. No, not once—but she is to be talked of for ever; so that egad you will think an hundred times that she is on the point of coming in.

Sneer. Hang it, I think it's a pity to keep her in the green room all the night.

Puff. O no, that always has a fine effect—it keeps up expectation.

Dangle. But are we not to have a battle?

Puff. Yes, yes, you will have a battle at last, but, egad, it's not to be by land—but by sea—and that is the only quite new thing in the piece.

Dangle. What, Drake at the Armada, hey?

Puff. Yes, efaith—fire ships and all—then we shall end with the procession.—Hey! that will do I think.

Sneer. No doubt on't.

Puff. Come, we must not lose time—so now for the UNDER PLOT.

Sneer. What the plague, have you another plot?

Puff. O lord, yes—ever while you live, have two plots to your tragedy.—The grand point in managing them, is only to let your under plot have as little connexion with your main point as possible.—I flatter myself nothing can be more distinct than mine; for, as in my chief plot, the characters are all great people—I have laid my under plot in low life—and as the former is to end in deep distress, I make the other end as happy as a farce.—Now Mr Hopkins, as soon as you please.

Enter UNDER PROMPTER.

Under Prompt. Sir, the carpenter says it is impossible you can go to the Park scene yet.

Puff. The Park scene! No—I mean the description scene here, in the wood.

Under Prompt. Sir, the performers have cut it out.

Puff. Cut it out!

Under Prompt. Yes Sir.

Puff. What! the whole account of Queen Elizabeth?

Under Prompt. Yes Sir.

Puff. And the description of her horse and side-saddle?

Under Prompt. Yes Sir.

Puff. So, so, this is very fine indeed! Mr Hopkins, how the plague could you suffer this?

Hopkins from within. Sir, indeed the pruning knife—

Puff. The pruning knife—zounds the axe! why, here has been such lopping and topping, I shan't have the bare trunk of my play left presently.—Very well, Sir—the performers must do as they please, but upon my soul, I'll print it every word.

Sneer. That I would indeed.

Puff. Very well—Sir—then we must go on—zounds! I would not have parted with the description of the horse!—Well, Sir, go on—Sir, it was one of the finest and most laboured things—Very well, Sir, let them go on—there you had him and his accoutrements from the bit to the crupper—very well, Sir, we must go to the Park scene.

Under Prompt. Sir, there is the point, the carpenters say, that unless there is some business put in here before the drop, they shan't have time to clear away the fort, or sink Gravefend and the river.

Puff. So! this is a pretty dilemma truly!—Gentlemen—you must excuse me, these fellows will never be ready, unless I go and look after them myself.

Sneer. O dear Sir—these little things will happen—

Puff. To cut out this scene!—but I'll print it—gad, I'll print it every word!

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT II.

A C T III.

SCENE I.

*Before the Curtain.**Enter PUFF, SNEER, and DANGLÉ.*

Puff. WELL, we are ready—now then for the justices.

[Curtain rises; Justices, Constables, &c. discovered.]

Sneer. This, I suppose, is a sort of senate scene.

Puff. To be sure—there has not been one yet.

Dangle. It is the under plot, isn't it?

Puff. Yes. What, gentlemen, do you mean to go at once to the discovery scene?

Justice. If you please, Sir.

Puff. O very well—harkee, I don't chuse to say any thing more; but csaith, they have mangled my play in a most shocking manner!

Dangle. It's a great pity!

Puff. Now then, Mr Justice, if you please.

Justice. Are all the volunteers without?

Constable. They are.

Sneer. Some ten in fetters, and some twenty drunk.

Justice. Attends the youth, whose most opprobrious fame

Sneer. And clear convicted crimes have stamp'd him soldier?

Constable. He waits your pleasure; eager to repay

Sneer. The best reprieve that sends him to the fields

Sneer. Of glory, there to raise his branded hand

Sneer. In honour's cause.

Justice.

- " *Justice.* 'Tis well——'tis Justice arms him!
 " O! may he now defend his country's laws
 " With half the spirit he has broke them all!
 " If 'tis your worship's pleasure, bid him enter.
 " *Constable.* I fly, the herald of your will.

[*Exit Constable.*]

Puff. Quick, Sir!

Sacer. But, Mr Puff, I think not only the Justice, but the clown seems to talk in as high a style as the first hero among them.

Puff. Heaven forbid they should not in a free country!—Sir, I am not for making slavish distinctions, and giving all the fine language to the upper sort of people.

Dangle. That's very noble in you indeed.

Enter JUSTICE'S LADY.

Puff. Now pray mark this scene.

- " *Lady.* Forgive this interruption, good my love;
 " But as I just now pass, a pris'ner youth
 " Whom rude hands hither led, strange bodings seiz'd
 " My fluttering heart, and to myself I said,
 " An if our TOM had liv'd, he'd surely been
 " This stripling's height!
 " *Justice.* Ha! sure some powerful sympathy directs
 " Us both——

Enter SON and CONSTABLE.

- " *Justice.* What is thy name?
 " *Son.* My name's TOM JENKINS—*alias*, have I
 " none——

" Tho' orphan'd, and without a friend!

" *Justice.* Thy parents?

" *Son.* My father dwelt in Rochester——and was,

" As I have heard——a fishmonger——no more.

Puff. What, Sir, do you leave out the account of your birth, parentage, and education?

Son. They have settled it so, Sir, here.

Puff. Oh! oh!

" *Lady.* How loudly nature whispers to my heart!

" Had he no other name?

" *Son.*

" Son. I've seen a bill

" Of his, sign'd Tomkins, creditor.

" Justice. This does indeed confirm each circumstance

" The gypsey told!—Prepare!

" Son. I do.

" Justice. No orphan, nor without a friend art thou—

" I am thy father, *here's* thy mother, *there*

" Thy uncle—this thy first cousin, and those

" Are all your near relations!

" Mother. O ecstasy of bliss!

" Son. O most unlook'd for happiness!

" Justice. O wonderful event!

[*They faint alternately in each others arms.*]

Puff. There, you see relationship, like murder, will out.

" Justice. Now let's revive—else were this joy too much!

" But come—and we'll unfold the rest within,

" And thou my boy must needs want rest and food.

" Hence may each orphan hope, as chance directs

" To find a father—where he least expects! [*Exeunt.*]

Puff. What do you think of that?

Dangle. One of the finest discovery-scenes I ever saw.

—Why, this under-plot would have made a tragedy itself.

Sneer. Aye, or a comedy either.

Puff. And keeps quite clear you see of the other.

Enter SCENEMEN, taking away the Seats.

Puff. The scene remains, does it?

Sceneman. Yes, Sir.

Puff. You are to leave one chair you know—But it is always awkward in a tragedy, to have you fellows coming in in your playhouse liveries to remove things—I wish that could be managed better.—So now for the mysterious yeoman.

Enter a BEEF-EATER.

" Beef-eater. Perdition catch my soul but I do love thee.

Sneer.

Sneer. Haven't I heard that line before?

Puff. No, I fancy not—Where pray?

Dangle. Yes, I think there is something like it in Othello.

Puff. Gad! now you put me in mind on't, I believe there is—but that's of no consequence—all—that can be said is, that two people happened to hit on the same thought—And Shakespeare made use of it first, that's all.

Sneer. Very true.

Puff. Now, Sir, your soliloquy—but speak more to the pit, if you please—the soliloquy always to the pit—that's a rule.

“ *Beef-eater.* Tho' hopeless love finds comfort in
“ despair,

“ It never can endure a rival's bliss!

“ But soft—I am observ'd. [*Exit Beef-eater.*

Dangle. That's a very short soliloquy.

Puff. Yes—but it would have been a great deal longer if he had not been observed.

Sneer. A most sentimental Beef-eater that, Mr Puff.

Puff. Hark!—I would not have you be too sure that he is a Beef-eater.

Sneer. What! a hero in disguise?

Puff. No matter—I only give you a hint—But now for my principal character—Here he comes—Lord Burleigh in person! Pray, gentlemen, step this way—softly—I only hope the Lord High Treasurer is perfect—if he is but perfect!

Enter BURLEIGH, goes slowly to a chair and sits.

Sneer. Mr Puff!

Puff. Hush!—vastly well, Sir! vastly well! a most interesting gravity!

Dangle. What, isn't he to speak at all?

Puff. Egad, I thought you'd ask me that—yes it is a very likely thing—that a Minister in his situation, with the whole affairs of the nation on his head, should have time to talk!—but hush! or you'll put him out.

Sneer. Put him out! how the plague can that be, if he's not going to say any thing?

Puff.

Sneer.

Puff. There's a reason!—why, his part is to *think*, and how the plague do you imagine he can *think* if you keep talking?

Dangle. That's very true upon my word!

[*Burligh comes forward, shakes his head and exit.*]

Sneer. He is very perfect indeed—Now, pray what did he mean by that?

Puff. You don't take it?

Sneer. No; I don't upon my soul.

Puff. Why, by that shake of the head, he gave you to understand that even though they had more justice in their cause and wisdom in their measures—yet, if there was not a greater spirit shown on the part of the people—the country would at last fall a sacrifice to the hostile ambition of the Spanish monarchy.

Sneer. The devil!—did he mean all that by shaking his head?

Puff. Every word of it—If he shook his head as I taught him.

Dangle. Ah! there certainly is a vast deal to be done on the stage by dumb shew, and expression of face, and a judicious author knows how much he may trust to it.

Sneer. O! here are some of our old acquaintance.

Enter HATTON and RALEIGH.

“*Sir Chris.* My niece, and your niece too!

“By heav'n! there's witchcraft in't—He 'could
“not else

“Have gain'd their hearts—But see where they
“approach;

“Some horrid purpose low'ring on their brows!

“*Sir Walter.* Let us withdraw and mark them.

[*They withdraw.*]

Sneer. What is all this?

Puff. Ah! here has been more pruning!—but the fact is, these two young ladies are also in love with Don Wiskerandos.—Now, gentlemen, this scene goes entirely for what we call *SITUATION* and *STAGE EFFECT*, by which the greatest applause may be obtained, without the assistance of language, sentiment, or character: pray mark!

Enter

Enter the TWO NIECES.

" 1st Niece. Ellena here!

" She is his scorn as much as I—that is

" Some comfort still.

Puff. O dear madam, you are not to say that to her face!—*aside*, ma'am, *aside*.—The whole scene is to be *aside*.

" 1st Niece. She is his scorn as much as I—that is

" Some comfort still! [*Aside*.

" 2d Niece. I know he prizes not Pollina's love,

" But Tilburina lords it o'er his heart. [*Aside*.

" 1st Niece. But see the proud destroyer of my peace.

" Revenge is all the good I've left. [*Aside*.

" 2d Niece. He comes, the false disturber of my

" quiet.

" Now vengeance do thy worst—— [*Aside*.

Enter WHISKERANDOS.

" O hateful liberty—if thus in vain

" I seek my Tilburina!

" Both Nieces. And ever shalt!

" Sir Christopher and Sir Walter come forward.

" Hold! we will avenge you.

" Whiskerandos. Hold you—or see your nieces

" bleed!

[The two nieces draw their two daggers to strike Whiskerandos; the two uncles at the instant with their two swords drawn, catch their two nieces arms, and turn the points of their swords to Whiskerandos, who immediately draws two daggers, and holds them to the two nieces bosoms.]

Puff. There's situation for you!—there's an heroic group!—You see the ladies can't stab Whiskerandos—he durst not strike them for fear of their uncles—the uncles durst not kill him, because of their nieces—I have them all at a dead lock!—for every one of them is afraid to let go first.

Sneer. Why, then they must stand there for ever.

Puff. So they would, if I hadn't a very fine contrivance for't—Now mind——

E

Enter

Enter BEEF-EATER with his Halberd.

" In the Queen's name I charge you all to drop

" Your swords and daggers !

[They drop their swords and daggers.]

Sneer. That is a contrivance indeed.

Puff. Aye—in the Queen's name.

" *Sir Chris.* Come niece !

" *Sir Raleigh.* Come niece !

[Exeunt with the two nieces.]

" *Whiskerandos.* What's he, who bids us thus renounce our guard ?

" *Beef-eater.* Thou must do more, renounce thy love !

" *Whiskerandos.* 'Thou liest—base Beef-eater !

" *Beef-eater.* Ha ! Heli ! the lie !

" By heav'n thou'lt rous'd the lion in my heart !

" Off yeoman's habit !—base disguise !—off ! off !

[Discovers himself, by throwing off his upper dress, and appearing in a very fine waistcoat.]

" Am I a Beef-eater now ?

" Or beams my crest as terrible as when

" In Biscay's Bay I took thy captive sloop.

Puff. There, egad ! he comes out to be the very captain of the privateer who had taken Whiskerandos prisoner—and was himself an old lover of Tilburina's.

Dangle. Admirably manag'd indeed.

Puff. Now, stand out of their way.

" *Whiskerandos.* I thank thee fortune ! that hast thus bestow'd

" A weapon to chastise this insolent.

[Takes up one of the swords.]

" *Beef-eater.* I take thy challenge, Spaniard, and I thank

" Thee, Fortune, too ! *[Takes up the other sword.]*

Dangle. That's excellently contrived !—it seems as if the two uncles had left their swords on purpose for them.

Puff. No, egad, they could not help leaving them.

" *Whiskerandos.* Vengeance and Tilburina !

" *Beef-eater.* Exactly so——

[They fight, and after the usual number of wounds given, Whiskerandos falls.]

" *Whif-*

" *Whiskerandos*. O cursed parry! —that last throſt

" in tierce

" Was fatal —Captain, thou haſt fenced well!

" And *Whiskerandos* quits this buſtling ſcene

" For all eter —

" *Beef-eater*. —nity—He would have added, but

" ltern death

" Cut ſhort his being, and the noun at once!

Puff. O, my dear Sir, you are too ſlow, now mind me.—Sir, ſhall I trouble you to die again?

" *Whiskerandos*. And *Whiskerandos* quits this buſtling ſcene

" For all eter —

" *Beef-eater*. —nity—He would have added —

Puff. No, Sir—that's not it—once more if you pleaſe—

Whiskerandos. I wiſh, Sir—you would praſtiſe this without me —I can't ſtay dying here all night.

Puff. Very well, we'll go over it by and bye—I muſt humour theſe gentlemen! [*Exit Whiskerandos*.]

" *Beef-eater*. Farewell—brave Spaniard! and

" when next —

Puff. Dear Sir, you needn't ſpeak that ſpeech as the body has walked off.

Beef-eater. That's true, Sir—then I'll join the fleet.

Puff. If you pleaſe. [*Exit Beef-eater*.]

Now, who comes on?

Enter GOVERNOR, with his hair properly diſordered.

" *Gov*. A hemisphere of evil planets reign!

" And every planet ſheds contagious phrenſy!

" My Spaniſh priſoner is ſlain! my daughter,

" Meeting the dead corſe borne along—has gone

" Diſtract! [*A loud ſourisb of trumpets*.]

" But hark! I am ſummon'd to the fort,

" Perhaps the fleets have met! amazing criſis!

" O *Tilburina*! from thy aged father's beard

" Thou'ſt pluck'd the few brown hairs which time

" had left! [*Exit Governor*.]

Sneer. Poor gentleman!

Puff. Yes—and no one to blame but his daughter!

Dangle. And the planets——

Puff. True—Now enter Tilburina.—

Sneer. Egad, the business comes on quick here.

Puff. Yes, Sir—now she comes in stark mad in white satin.

Sneer. Why in white satin?

Puff. O Lord, Sir—when a heroine goes mad, she always goes into white satin—don't she, Dangle?

Dangle. Always—it's a rule.

Puff. Yes—here it is—(*locking at the book*) 'Enter Tilburina stark mad in white satin, and her confidant stark mad in white linen.'

Enter TILBURINA and CONFIDANT mad, according to custom.

Sneer. But what the deuce, is the confidant to be mad too?

Puff. To be sure she is, the confidant is always to do whatever her mistress does; weep when she weeps, smile when she smiles, go mad when she goes mad.—Now madam confidant—but—keep your madness in the back ground, if you please.

"*Tilburina.* The wind whistles—the moon rises

"——see

" They have kill'd my squirrel in his cage!

" Is this a grasshopper?—Ha! no, it is my

" Whiskerandos—you shall not keep him——

" I know you have him in your pocket——

" An oyster may be cross'd in love!—— Who says

" A whale's a bird?—Ha! did you call, my love?

" ——He's here! He's there!——He's every where!

" Ah me! He's no where! [*Exit Tilburina.*

Puff. There, do you ever desire to see any body madder than that?

Sneer. Never while I live!

Puff. You observed how she mangled the metre?

Dangle. Yes—egad, it was the first thing made me suspect she was out of her senses.

Sneer. And pray what becomes of her?

Puff.

Puff. She is gone to throw herself into the sea to be sure—and that brings us at once to the scene of action, and so to my catastrophe—my sea-fight, I mean.

Sneer. What, you bring that in at last?

Puff. Yes—yes—you know my play is called the *Spanish Armada*, otherwise, egad, I have no occasion for the battle at all.—Now then for my magnificence!—my battle!—my noise!—and my procession!—You are all ready?

Prompter within. Yes, Sir.

Puff. Is the Thames dress?

Enter THAMES with two Attendants.

Thames. Here I am, Sir.

Puff. Very well indeed—See, gentlemen, there's a river for you!—This is blending a little of the masque with my tragedy—a new fancy you know—and very useful in my case; for as there *must be a procession*, I suppose Thames and all his tributary rivers to compliment Britannia with a fete in honour of the victory.

Sneer. But pray, who are these gentlemen in green with him?

Puff. Those?—those are his banks.

Sneer. His banks?

Puff. Yes, one crown'd with alders, and the other with a villa!—you take the allusions?—but hey! what the plague! you have got both your banks on one side—Here, Sir, come round—Ever while you live, Thames, go between your banks. (*Bell rings.*)—There, soh! now for't!—Stand aside my dear friends!—away Thames!

[*Exit Thames between his banks.*]

[*Flourish of drums—trumpets—cannon, &c. Scene changes to the sea—the fleets engage—the music plays 'Britons strike home.'—Spanish fleet destroyed by fire ships, &c.—English fleet advances—music plays 'Rule Britannia.'—The procession of all the English rivers and their tributaries with their emblems, &c. begins with Handel's water music—ends with*

Puff.

*with a chorus, to the march in Judas Maccabeus.—
During this scene, Puff directs and applauds every
thing——then]*

Puff. Well, pretty well—but not quite perfect—so ladies and gentlemen, if you please, we'll rehearse this piece again to-morrow.

CURTAIN DROPE.

FINIS.